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HARVARD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

32 Avenue of the Americas, London SW1W 8SA

The Times' Literary Supplement

September 25-October 1 1987 Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX

Contents

Roy Jenkins: backstage at the election pantomime 1037
Keynes, the market and unemployment 1035-6
Frank Kermode on Joachim de Fiore 1054-5
Howard Jacobson's 'Oz' 1042
Chinweizu and 'Decolonising the African Mind' 1040
Trouble in paradise: James Clifford on Fiji 1041-2
Wilfrid Mellers on 'Pacific Overtures' 1049

AFRICA 1040, AUTOBIOGRAPHY 1045-6, BIOGRAPHY AND SPORT 1057, ECONOMICS 1035-6, FICTION 1051-3, HISTORY 1038-9, HISTORY OF IDEAS 1054-5, LITERATURE 1044, MUSIC 1050, POETRY AND CRITICISM 1043, POLITICS 1037, RELIGION 1056, TRAVEL 1041-2

ROBERT SKIDELSKY

Will Hutton: *The Revolution that Never Was – An assessment of Keynesian economics*
Keynes's "General Theory": Fifty years on
Richard Layard: *How to Beat Unemployment* 1035-6

ROY JENKINS

ROY FOSTER

Rodney Tyley: *Campaign! – The selling of the Prime Minister* 1037
J. P. Barry: *Democracy and Religion – Gladstone and the Liberal Party 1867-1875*
Edward Hamilton: *The Destruction of Lord Rosbery – From the diary of Sir Edward Hamilton 1894-1895*

John Pym's Spencer: *The Red Earl – The papers of the fifth Earl Spencer 1835-1910 – Volume One, 1835-1885; Volume Two, 1885-1910*

DAVID CANNADINE

ROBERT HARRIS

TOM PHILLIPS

JAMES CLIFFORD

ALAN ROSS

CLIVE WILMER

JENNY PENBERTHY

TIM DOOLEY

GABRIEL JOSIFOVICI

Richard Fothergill: *Yoking England* 1039
Chinweizu: *Decolonising the African Mind* 1040
Georges Mourant: *Shoona Design – African textiles from the Kingdom of Kuba* 1040
Ronald Wright: *On Fiji Islands* 1041-2
Howard Jacobson: *In the Land of Oz* 1042

Terry Comita: *In Defense of Winters – The poetry and prose of Yvor Winters* 1043
Lorine Nieckel: *From This Condensery – The complete writings. "Between Your House and Mine" – The letters of Lorine Nieckel to Cid Corman, 1960 to 1970* 1043

Conrad Solleil (poem) 1043
Michel Proust: *On Reading Ruskin – Prefaces to "La Bible d'Ambiens" and "Sésame et les Lys", with selections from the notes to the translated texts* 1044

George Oising: *Vermittlung* 1044
J. L. M. Stewart: *Myself and Michael Innes – A memoir* 1045
Rosemary Manning: *A Curdior of Mirrors* 1045
William Clark: *From Three Worlds – Memoirs* 1045

ND
American notes 1046
Advice unheeded 1046
Rabbit deluxe 1046

Letters on 'The Closing of the American Mind', 'The Day of Judgement', 'Parallel Distributed Processing', etc 1047

Commentary
Friedrich Schiller: *Don Carlos* (Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester) 1048
John Berger and Nella Blaisky: *A Question of Geography* (The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon) 1048

Cyril Tournour: *The Revenger's Tragedy* (Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon) 1048
Giuseppe Verdi: *Aida* (Theatre Royal, Glasgow) 1049
Ben Jonson: *The Magnetic Lady* (Radio 3) 1049
Stephen Sondheimer and John Weidman: *Pacific Overtures* (Coliseum) 1049

William P. Malm: *Six Hidden Views of Japanese Music* 1050
Donald Mitchell (Editor): *Benjamin Brinn – "Death in Venice"* 1050
William Boyd: *The New Confessions* 1051
Oerek Robinson: *War Story* 1051

Mavis Oallam: *Overhead in a Balloon – Stories of Paris* 1052
Wilson Harris: *The Infinite Rehearsal* 1052
Mary Beckett: *Give Them Stones* 1052
Oahrielle Connolly: *Holy Mother* 1052
Lisa St Aubin de Terán: *Black Idol* 1053

Tim Parks: *Home Thought* 1053
Judith Chermak: *Leah* 1053
Marjorie Reeves and Warwick Gould: *Jonah in the Myth of the Eternal Evangel in the Nineteenth Century* 1054-5

Geoffrey Parrinder: *Encountering World Religions*
Hans Küng: *Christianity and the World Religions – Paths of dialogue with Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism* 1056

Robert Hughes: *The Red Dean – The life and riddle of Dr Hewlett Johnson, born 1874, died 1966, Dean of Canterbury 1931 to 1963* 1056
Anthony Kenny: *A Syncretic Study of the New Testament* 1056

Weidman Dreams (poem) 1056
Paul Buhle (Editor): *C. L. R. James – His life and work* 1057
C. L. R. James: *Crickets* 1057

Caroline Blackwood: *In the Pink – Caroline Blackwood on hunting* 1057
7LS Listings 1058-9
Among this week's contributors 1057
Author, Author 1048
Crossword 1060
Index of books reviewed 1059

ALAN RACE
EDWARD NORMAN
J. L. HOULDEN
ALICE GOLEMBIEWSKI
PHILLIPS
STEFAN COLLINI
ROGER LONGRIGG

William P. Malm: *Six Hidden Views of Japanese Music* 1050
Donald Mitchell (Editor): *Benjamin Brinn – "Death in Venice"* 1050
William Boyd: *The New Confessions* 1051
Oerek Robinson: *War Story* 1051

Mavis Oallam: *Overhead in a Balloon – Stories of Paris* 1052
Wilson Harris: *The Infinite Rehearsal* 1052
Mary Beckett: *Give Them Stones* 1052
Oahrielle Connolly: *Holy Mother* 1052
Lisa St Aubin de Terán: *Black Idol* 1053

Tim Parks: *Home Thought* 1053
Judith Chermak: *Leah* 1053
Marjorie Reeves and Warwick Gould: *Jonah in the Myth of the Eternal Evangel in the Nineteenth Century* 1054-5

Geoffrey Parrinder: *Encountering World Religions*
Hans Küng: *Christianity and the World Religions – Paths of dialogue with Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism* 1056

Robert Hughes: *The Red Dean – The life and riddle of Dr Hewlett Johnson, born 1874, died 1966, Dean of Canterbury 1931 to 1963* 1056
Anthony Kenny: *A Syncretic Study of the New Testament* 1056

Weidman Dreams (poem) 1056
Paul Buhle (Editor): *C. L. R. James – His life and work* 1057
C. L. R. James: *Crickets* 1057

Caroline Blackwood: *In the Pink – Caroline Blackwood on hunting* 1057
7LS Listings 1058-9
Among this week's contributors 1057
Author, Author 1048
Crossword 1060
Index of books reviewed 1059

ALAN RACE
EDWARD NORMAN
J. L. HOULDEN
ALICE GOLEMBIEWSKI
PHILLIPS
STEFAN COLLINI
ROGER LONGRIGG

William P. Malm: *Six Hidden Views of Japanese Music* 1050
Donald Mitchell (Editor): *Benjamin Brinn – "Death in Venice"* 1050
William Boyd: *The New Confessions* 1051
Oerek Robinson: *War Story* 1051

Mavis Oallam: *Overhead in a Balloon – Stories of Paris* 1052
Wilson Harris: *The Infinite Rehearsal* 1052
Mary Beckett: *Give Them Stones* 1052
Oahrielle Connolly: *Holy Mother* 1052
Lisa St Aubin de Terán: *Black Idol* 1053

Tim Parks: *Home Thought* 1053
Judith Chermak: *Leah* 1053
Marjorie Reeves and Warwick Gould: *Jonah in the Myth of the Eternal Evangel in the Nineteenth Century* 1054-5

Geoffrey Parrinder: *Encountering World Religions*
Hans Küng: *Christianity and the World Religions – Paths of dialogue with Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism* 1056

Robert Hughes: *The Red Dean – The life and riddle of Dr Hewlett Johnson, born 1874, died 1966, Dean of Canterbury 1931 to 1963* 1056
Anthony Kenny: *A Syncretic Study of the New Testament* 1056

Weidman Dreams (poem) 1056
Paul Buhle (Editor): *C. L. R. James – His life and work* 1057
C. L. R. James: *Crickets* 1057

Caroline Blackwood: *In the Pink – Caroline Blackwood on hunting* 1057
7LS Listings 1058-9
Among this week's contributors 1057
Author, Author 1048
Crossword 1060
Index of books reviewed 1059

ALAN RACE
EDWARD NORMAN
J. L. HOULDEN
ALICE GOLEMBIEWSKI
PHILLIPS
STEFAN COLLINI
ROGER LONGRIGG

William P. Malm: *Six Hidden Views of Japanese Music* 1050
Donald Mitchell (Editor): *Benjamin Brinn – "Death in Venice"* 1050
William Boyd: *The New Confessions* 1051
Oerek Robinson: *War Story* 1051

Mavis Oallam: *Overhead in a Balloon – Stories of Paris* 1052
Wilson Harris: *The Infinite Rehearsal* 1052
Mary Beckett: *Give Them Stones* 1052
Oahrielle Connolly: *Holy Mother* 1052
Lisa St Aubin de Terán: *Black Idol* 1053

Tim Parks: *Home Thought* 1053
Judith Chermak: *Leah* 1053
Marjorie Reeves and Warwick Gould: *Jonah in the Myth of the Eternal Evangel in the Nineteenth Century* 1054-5

Geoffrey Parrinder: *Encountering World Religions*
Hans Küng: *Christianity and the World Religions – Paths of dialogue with Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism* 1056

Robert Hughes: *The Red Dean – The life and riddle of Dr Hewlett Johnson, born 1874, died 1966, Dean of Canterbury 1931 to 1963* 1056
Anthony Kenny: *A Syncretic Study of the New Testament* 1056

Weidman Dreams (poem) 1056
Paul Buhle (Editor): *C. L. R. James – His life and work* 1057
C. L. R. James: *Crickets* 1057

Caroline Blackwood: *In the Pink – Caroline Blackwood on hunting* 1057
7LS Listings 1058-9
Among this week's contributors 1057
Author, Author 1048
Crossword 1060
Index of books reviewed 1059

ALAN RACE
EDWARD NORMAN
J. L. HOULDEN
ALICE GOLEMBIEWSKI
PHILLIPS
STEFAN COLLINI
ROGER LONGRIGG

William P. Malm: *Six Hidden Views of Japanese Music* 1050
Donald Mitchell (Editor): *Benjamin Brinn – "Death in Venice"* 1050
William Boyd: *The New Confessions* 1051
Oerek Robinson: *War Story* 1051

Mavis Oallam: *Overhead in a Balloon – Stories of Paris* 1052
Wilson Harris: *The Infinite Rehearsal* 1052
Mary Beckett: *Give Them Stones* 1052
Oahrielle Connolly: *Holy Mother* 1052
Lisa St Aubin de Terán: *Black Idol* 1053

Tim Parks: *Home Thought* 1053
Judith Chermak: *Leah* 1053
Marjorie Reeves and Warwick Gould: *Jonah in the Myth of the Eternal Evangel in the Nineteenth Century* 1054-5

Geoffrey Parrinder: *Encountering World Religions*
Hans Küng: *Christianity and the World Religions – Paths of dialogue with Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism* 1056

Robert Hughes: *The Red Dean – The life and riddle of Dr Hewlett Johnson, born 1874, died 1966, Dean of Canterbury 1931 to 1963* 1056
Anthony Kenny: *A Syncretic Study of the New Testament* 1056

Weidman Dreams (poem) 1056
Paul Buhle (Editor): *C. L. R. James – His life and work* 1057
C. L. R. James: *Crickets* 1057

Caroline Blackwood: *In the Pink – Caroline Blackwood on hunting* 1057
7LS Listings 1058-9
Among this week's contributors 1057
Author, Author 1048
Crossword 1060
Index of books reviewed 1059

ALAN RACE
EDWARD NORMAN
J. L. HOULDEN
ALICE GOLEMBIEWSKI
PHILLIPS
STEFAN COLLINI
ROGER LONGRIGG

William P. Malm: *Six Hidden Views of Japanese Music* 1050
Donald Mitchell (Editor): *Benjamin Brinn – "Death in Venice"* 1050
William Boyd: *The New Confessions* 1051
Oerek Robinson: *War Story* 1051

Mavis Oallam: *Overhead in a Balloon – Stories of Paris* 1052
Wilson Harris: *The Infinite Rehearsal* 1052
Mary Beckett: *Give Them Stones* 1052
Oahrielle Connolly: *Holy Mother* 1052
Lisa St Aubin de Terán: *Black Idol* 1053

Tim Parks: *Home Thought* 1053
Judith Chermak: *Leah* 1053
Marjorie Reeves and Warwick Gould: *Jonah in the Myth of the Eternal Evangel in the Nineteenth Century* 1054-5

Geoffrey Parrinder: *Encountering World Religions*
Hans Küng: *Christianity and the World Religions – Paths of dialogue with Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism* 1056

Robert Hughes: *The Red Dean – The life and riddle of Dr Hewlett Johnson, born 1874, died 1966, Dean of Canterbury 1931 to 1963* 1056
Anthony Kenny: *A Syncretic Study of the New Testament* 1056

Weidman Dreams (poem) 1056
Paul Buhle (Editor): *C. L. R. James – His life and work* 1057
C. L. R. James: *Crickets* 1057

Caroline Blackwood: *In the Pink – Caroline Blackwood on hunting* 1057
7LS Listings 1058-9
Among this week's contributors 1057
Author, Author 1048
Crossword 1060
Index of books reviewed 1059

ALAN RACE
EDWARD NORMAN
J. L. HOULDEN
ALICE GOLEMBIEWSKI
PHILLIPS
STEFAN COLLINI
ROGER LONGRIGG

William P. Malm: *Six Hidden Views of Japanese Music* 1050
Donald Mitchell (Editor): *Benjamin Brinn – "Death in Venice"* 1050
William Boyd: *The New Confessions* 1051
Oerek Robinson: *War Story* 1051

Mavis Oallam: *Overhead in a Balloon – Stories of Paris* 1052
Wilson Harris: *The Infinite Rehearsal* 1052
Mary Beckett: *Give Them Stones* 1052
Oahrielle Connolly: *Holy Mother* 1052
Lisa St Aubin de Terán: *Black Idol* 1053

Tim Parks: *Home Thought* 1053
Judith Chermak: *Leah* 1053
Marjorie Reeves and Warwick Gould: *Jonah in the Myth of the Eternal Evangel in the Nineteenth Century* 1054-5

Geoffrey Parrinder: *Encountering World Religions*
Hans Küng: *Christianity and the World Religions – Paths of dialogue with Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism* 1056

Robert Hughes: *The Red Dean – The life and riddle of Dr Hewlett Johnson, born 1874, died 1966, Dean of Canterbury 1931 to 1963* 1056
Anthony Kenny: *A Syncretic Study of the New Testament* 1056

Weidman Dreams (poem) 1056
Paul Buhle (Editor): *C. L. R. James – His life and work* 1057
C. L. R. James: *Crickets* 1057

Caroline Blackwood: *In the Pink – Caroline Blackwood on hunting* 1057
7LS Listings 1058-9
Among this week's contributors 1057
Author, Author 1048
Crossword 1060
Index of books reviewed 1059

ALAN RACE
EDWARD NORMAN
J. L. HOULDEN
ALICE GOLEMBIEWSKI
PHILLIPS
STEFAN COLLINI
ROGER LONGRIGG

William P. Malm: *Six Hidden Views of Japanese Music* 1050
Donald Mitchell (Editor): *Benjamin Brinn – "Death in Venice"* 1050
William Boyd: *The New Confessions* 1051
Oerek Robinson: *War Story* 1051

Mavis Oallam: *Overhead in a Balloon – Stories of Paris* 1052
Wilson Harris: *The Infinite Rehearsal* 1052
Mary Beckett: *Give Them Stones* 1052
Oahrielle Connolly: *Holy Mother* 1052
Lisa St Aubin de Terán: *Black Idol* 1053

Tim Parks: *Home Thought* 1053
Judith Chermak: *Leah* 1053
Marjorie Reeves and Warwick Gould: *Jonah in the Myth of the Eternal Evangel in the Nineteenth Century* 1054-5

Geoffrey Parrinder: *Encountering World Religions*
Hans Küng: *Christianity and the World Religions – Paths of dialogue with Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism* 1056

Robert Hughes: *The Red Dean – The life and riddle of Dr Hewlett Johnson, born 1874, died 1966, Dean of Canterbury 1931 to 1963* 1056
Anthony Kenny: *A Syncretic Study of the New Testament* 1056

Weidman Dreams (poem) 1056
Paul Buhle (Editor): *C. L. R. James – His life and work* 1057
C. L. R. James: *Crickets* 1057

Caroline Blackwood: *In the Pink – Caroline Blackwood on hunting* 1057
7LS Listings 1058-9
Among this week's contributors 1057
Author, Author 1048
Crossword 1060
Index of books reviewed 1059

ALAN RACE
EDWARD NORMAN
J. L. HOULDEN
ALICE GOLEMBIEWSKI
PHILLIPS
STEFAN COLLINI
ROGER LONGRIGG

William P. Malm: *Six Hidden Views of Japanese Music* 1050
Donald Mitchell (Editor): *Benjamin Brinn – "Death in Venice"* 1050
William Boyd: *The New Confessions* 1051
Oerek Robinson: *War Story* 1051

Mavis Oallam: *Overhead in a Balloon – Stories of Paris* 1052
Wilson Harris: *The Infinite Rehearsal* 1052
Mary Beckett: *Give Them Stones* 1052
Oahrielle Connolly: *Holy Mother* 1052
Lisa St Aubin de Terán: *Black Idol* 1053

Tim Parks: *Home Thought* 1053
Judith Chermak: *Leah* 1053
Marjorie Reeves and Warwick Gould: *Jonah in the Myth of the Eternal Evangel in the Nineteenth Century* 1054-5

Geoffrey Parrinder: *Encountering World Religions*
Hans Küng: *Christianity and the World Religions – Paths of dialogue with Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism* 1056

Robert Hughes: *The Red Dean – The life and riddle of Dr Hewlett Johnson, born 1874, died 1966, Dean of Canterbury 1931 to 1963* 1056
Anthony Kenny: *A Syncretic Study of the New Testament* 1056

Weidman Dreams (poem) 1056
Paul Buhle (Editor): *C. L. R. James – His life and work* 1057
C. L. R. James: *Crickets* 1057

Caroline Blackwood: *In the Pink – Caroline Blackwood on hunting* 1057
7LS Listings 1058-9
Among this week's contributors 1057
Author, Author 1048
Crossword 1060
Index of books reviewed 1059

ALAN RACE
EDWARD NORMAN
J. L. HOULDEN
ALICE GOLEMBIEWSKI
PHILLIPS
STEFAN COLLINI
ROGER LONGRIGG

William P. Malm: *Six Hidden Views of Japanese Music* 1050
Donald Mitchell (Editor): *Benjamin Brinn – "Death in Venice"* 1050
William Boyd: *The New Confessions* 1051
Oerek Robinson: *War Story* 1051

Mavis Oallam: *Overhead in a Balloon – Stories of Paris* 1052
Wilson Harris: *The Infinite Rehearsal* 1052
Mary Beckett: *Give Them Stones* 1052
Oahrielle Connolly: *Holy Mother* 1052
Lisa St Aubin de Terán: *Black Idol* 1053

Tim Parks: *Home Thought* 1053
Judith Chermak: *Leah* 1053
Marjorie Reeves and Warwick Gould: *Jonah in the Myth of the Eternal Evangel in the Nineteenth Century* 1054-5

Geoffrey Parrinder: *Encountering World Religions*
Hans Küng: *Christianity and the World Religions – Paths of dialogue with Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism* 1056

Robert Hughes: *The Red Dean – The life and riddle of Dr Hewlett Johnson, born 1874, died 1966, Dean of Canterbury 1931 to 1963* 1056
Anthony Kenny: *A Syncretic Study of the New Testament* 1056

Weidman Dreams (poem) 1056
Paul Buhle (Editor): *C. L. R. James – His life and work* 1057
C. L. R. James: *Crickets* 1057

merely the empirical assumptions of classical theory. Keynes's own beliefs are not the key issue here. He may have thought he was challenging the logical basis of the other theory, but only have succeeded in undermining its empirical assumptions. The main issue is whether there exists the possibility of a dialogue on synthesis between the Keynesian and anti-Keynesian traditions, which could lead to a consensus on policy. Keynesians like Hutton who imply that a theory of value (or relative prices) is logically impossible put themselves beyond the possibility of such a dialogue. However, if it is a matter of sticky prices, a basis for dialogue exists. It then becomes a question of how best to theorize about such prices, their consequences for the economy, and their implications for policy.

These matters are taken up in Keynes's *"General Theory"*: Fifty years on. One expects any compilation from the Institute of Economic Affairs to convict the Master of root-and-branch error. It is a sign of the times that, with John Burton's thoughtful introduction setting the tone, Keynes is treated throughout with wary respect, which in the improbable case of Milton Friedman rises almost to adulation. Criticism of Keynes focuses on two main points: that the *General Theory* "crowded out" an intellectually sounder approach to theorizing about economic disturbances; and that Keynes failed to balance properly the costs of market failure against the costs of government failure.

The promising research programme which Keynes supposedly crowded out is called by Professor Yeager the "monetary disequilibrium" approach. This affirmed, first of all, that economies were self-correcting. Mass unemployment, that is to say, is a disequilibrium condition, not an equilibrium one. It generated forces tending to restore full employment. Second, it was held that this disequilibrium condition usually results from a disturbance in the money supply. Provided that the monetary authority can keep money "neutral", a money economy will behave like a barter economy. As Yeager puts it:

Clark Walburn... argued... a tendency towards equilibrium rather than disequilibrium is inherent in the logic of a market economy. Whenever, therefore, markets are quite generally and conspicuously failing to clear, some essentially exogenous [external] disturbance must have occurred... In a depression what bars people from accomplishing all the exchanges of each other's goods and services that they desire is a deficient real quantity of money. Such a deficiency could arise either from a shrinkage of the money supply or from its failure to keep pace with the demand for money associated with real economic growth. Even then, the real money supply would remain adequate if people marked down their prices and wages sufficiently and promptly. Price and wage "stickiness" is, however, sensible from the standpoint of individual decision-makers, in the face of monetary disturbances, even though that stickiness has painful macro-economic consequences.

No one reading the IEA book would gather that Keynes himself came out of the monetary disequilibrium stable - his *Treatise on Money* was his grand essay in this tradition - and only broke with it when he concluded it could not yield fruitful policy prescriptions. The problem was that it was impossible to specify a policy for keeping money neutral - eliminating, that is, all those functions of money which disturb the equilibrium. All policies for keeping money neutral have reference to "equilibrium conditions" which are not present in actual economic data. Wicksteed, for example, argued that monetary policy should be geared to keeping the actual rate of interest equal to its "natural" rate - the rate which equalized saving and investment. But he offered no guidance as to what the natural (or equilibrium) rate was. The monetary authority, in other words, was being asked to hit not so much a moving target as an invisible one. Keynes eventually broke out of this bind by postulating the possibility of any number of equilibria (points of rest) at any level of activity - and leaving it to the government to choose which particular level it wanted to achieve and sustain. The main defect of this drastic solution was that it left out dynamics: Keynes's economy was always in a state of repose, with the action so to speak, taking place off-stage. But it had the advantage of abandoning the search for the elusive criterion of "neutral" money; and it spoke much more directly to the situation of persisting mass unemployment and to the needs of policy-

makers. Keynes was a better political economist than were the disequilibrium theorists.

The second major criticism of Keynes - that he failed to recognize the possibility of government failure - is more to the point. Friedman attributes this to Keynes's being an Englishman rather than an American. He and his English fellow-economists took for granted a system of oligarchic government served by an incorruptible civil service. Had his experience been with "the inefficient and incompetent state and federal civil service in the USA and with the US citizenry, who are anything but automatically law-abiding", he might have been less willing to entrust government with vast additional discretionary powers on a permanent basis. It is no accident that "public choice" theory, developed by the Nobel Laureate James Buchanan, which alleges an inherent bias towards perpetual deficit finance on the part of ambitious bureaucrats and vote-catching politicians, should have originated in the United States. The remedy, according to this school of thought, is to entrench some régime-like balanced budget system of old - which would prevent governments indulging their inflationary proclivities.

Keynes did assume a greater degree of disinterestedness in the conduct of affairs than it was realistic of him to expect, especially after his own experiences with Lloyd George. However, it is wrong to think that the Keynesian system which emerged after his death was the one he expected. For one thing he believed that it would be discretionary fiscal policy which would be used to keep economies at their target level of activity - and that such policy would be independent of political control. For another, he never believed that the government's advisers would (in English) continuously aim to hit a target of unemployment as low as 1 or 2 per cent - a point to which we shall return. He would have become very quickly aware of the dangers of building inflationary expectations into the system. The fact remains, however, that his theory did legitimize a scrapping of old defences against the hubris and the corruption of power. Great man that he was, Keynes was also a man of his time. Getting rid of unemployment seemed more urgent than worrying about inflation: he failed to see that "neutral" politics was as much a pipe dream as "neutral" money.

These two lines of attack on Keynes do not exclude fruitful discussion between Keynesians and anti-Keynesians. It is possible to argue about how strongly, and how quickly, an economy is self-correcting; about how much, and what kind of, managing a government should try to do. This is one reason for the great interest that attaches to Richard Layard's *How to Beat Unemployment*. What Layard tries to do is to argue a case for Keynesian demand-expansion to lower unemployment within a "new classical" (or anti-Keynesian) analytic framework. I don't think it quite comes off, but it is an indication of the changing climate that the attempt is being made. The book is written in the rather irritating baby-talk that economists often use in an effort to make their ideas clear to non-economists. In fact, the ideas are difficult, and too much of the argument is left out. The art is not to leave out the difficult bits, but to present them attractively, and make them intelligible to the non-technical reader.

The best way to start on Layard is to ask the question: what do we mean by full employment? Keynes himself never believed that deficient demand accounted for the whole of any given amount of unemployment. He divided unemployment into "voluntary" and "involuntary" varieties. The distinction was between those who prided themselves on not being in "nonnal" times by asking for a wage which exceeded their value to the employer, and those who could not price themselves back into jobs, however hard they tried (and perhaps they didn't always try that hard) because, with the economy turning down, their asking price, however much they lowered it, would still be higher than what it was worth the employer to pay them. Obviously Keynes thought that the ratio of involuntary to voluntary unemployment rose during a depression. The important point, though, is that for him full employment was compatible with the existence of voluntary unemployment. The other point was that there

was no a priori method of distinguishing between the two kinds of unemployment. Keynes reckoned, on the basis of historical experience, that normal (or voluntary) unemployment in Britain was about 5 per cent of the labour force. The purpose of his distinction was to set limits to what a government could hope to do by way of demand-expansion, without running into problems of inflation or over-heating. If even 5 per cent was politically unacceptable, then the government would need to act on what is now called the supply-side of the economy - make it more painful for workers to choose not to work.

Milton Friedman gave a much sharper analytical edge to the distinction between the two types of unemployment when, in 1967, he invented the idea of the "natural rate of unemployment". This he defined as the unemployment rate consistent with zero, or stable, inflation. (This "natural rate" is now called the NAIRU or Non-Accelerating Inflation Rate of Unemployment, a much more horrid term.) Friedman meant by the natural rate roughly what unemployment would be if the economy were behaving "normally". Like Wicksteed's natural rate of interest, it was an equilibrium condition. Friedman's purposes, however, were rather different from Keynes's. First, Friedman, like the monetarist disequilibrium theorists already mentioned, thought that economies always tend to their natural rate of unemployment. Second, Friedman's natural rate, unlike Keynes's normal rate, had no historical reference. You simply knew that actual unemployment was at its natural rate when inflation was stable, but you could not say in advance what the natural rate was. All you could state with certainty was that when inflation was rising, unemployment must be below its natural rate; when it was falling, above it. Friedman's purpose in forging this tool of thought now becomes clear. Accelerating inflation, he claimed, was the result of continuous Keynesian attempts to hit a target level of unemployment below the natural rate by means of monetary expansion. He had apparently meant to deal blow to the Keynesian practice of his day and ushered in monetarism. The government's main task was to stop inflating the money supply. Once this was done, unemployment would settle down to its natural rate and that was the end of the story - at least of the part that demand played in it.

This kind of analysis hardly looks like a promising starting-point for an argument urging the government to reflate the economy: yet this is essentially how Layard uses it. He argues that the Thatcher contractionary "over-kill" of 1981-2, which halved the inherited inflation rate, pushed actual unemployment above its NAIRU, where it has stuck. (The book was written before the recent fall in unemployment.) This is the basis of his proposal to expand demand by targeting an extra £3 billion on 750,000 long-term unemployed, who would be guaranteed one-year jobs in the construction industries, social services and the private sector. He puts forward the interesting argument that "a once-for-all cut in [long-term] unemployment would tend to reduce the NAIRU, by increasing the number of insiders" - that is, by bringing extra workers into the labour market as job competitors. Layard justifies the limited scope of his reflationary package with the assertion that the British NAIRU is about 10 per cent, but the basis for this assertion is not given. In any case, economic recovery, stimulated by special government schemes, has already pushed back unemployment towards 10 per cent, so this part of his plan has been overtaken by events.

This brings us to the second part of the Layard plan: the reduction of what he calls the long-term NAIRU. This, in his view, requires a permanent incomes policy. Very briefly, the argument is as follows. Layard's NAIRU, unlike Friedman's, is not just the unemployment rate consistent with stable inflation, but the rate which keeps inflation stable. This reflects the more useful British view that inflation is a "cost push" phenomenon: we get inflation, Layard argues, not because the government keeps pumping extra money into the economy to reduce unemployment, but because trade union demand for higher real wages is higher than the "feasible" real wage

employers can afford. The NAIRU is the amount of unemployment needed to equalize the target and feasible real wage. Obviously, the greater the pressure of cost push by trade unions, the higher the NAIRU - or the cost in unemployment of keeping prices stable - will need to be.

The purpose of Layard's incomes policy is to reduce real wage pressure, at a given level of unemployment, and thus reduce the unemployment cost of maintaining stable prices. The government would impose a tax on employers to the full amount of any pay rise they concede above a government-determined norm for the growth of hourly earnings. The assumption is that the norm would be lower than current wage increases. The government would then have a policy choice. Either it could reflate the economy, in Keynesian fashion, so as to maintain stable prices at a lower level of unemployment, or it could allow inflation to fall at the existing level of unemployment. "Either outcome", Layard writes, "would be a lot better than what we now have." He prefers the first.

The scheme is ingenious; in fact, it represents the most interesting alternative to Thatcherism which has emerged in recent years. It suffers, however, from a fatal flaw, namely its reliance on permanent incomes policy. There is no need to rehearse all the old arguments against incomes policy: merely to say that the premise that it can permanently contain wage inflation has not stood the test of experience. Admittedly, tax-incentive policies of the Layard kind avoid some of the problems of the bureaucratic controls of the past. But they also appear to assume a degree of employer control over the wage bargain which, if true, would make them unnecessary. We must also insist on a point which Layard fudges. The purpose of his incomes policy is to reduce the average real wage. On Layard's analysis, the reduction in real wages is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for reducing unemployment. In a more recent article, written with Stephen Nickell (*Guardian*, February 4, 1987), Layard argues that "living standards need not fall" because a higher level of activity would raise national income, increase government revenues and thus permit tax reductions "in a way that completely offset the fall in wages (relative to prices) required to permit the expansion in employment". One can just hear the cynical union leader: "Tell me another!" The fact is that trade union leaders are simply not interested in maximizing the employment of their members at the expense of real wages. They at least have some control over the wage bargain: they have none over tax policies. And I do not see them willingly surrendering what they control in return for promises which they know all too well are likely to be broken whenever it suits the government to do so.

So I would want to marry the Keynesian and anti-Keynesian positions in a somewhat different way. We cannot dispense with Keynes, because market economies are inherently unstable and weakly self-correcting. It is not true that a flexible economy will naturally recover and maintain a full-employment level of activity, as Mrs Thatcher and her ministers seem to believe. At the same time, if we want the economy to deliver larger supplies at unchanged or lowered costs, we have to ensure this not by trying to get monopolies (business or union) to behave better, but by breaking them up - by moving the economy closer, that is, towards the competitive ideal. Technology, perhaps, is doing some of this already. But the most effective anti-monopoly policy is international and internal free trade. Too often the present government has privatized without deregulating. Competition is the key to more flexible prices in both product and labour markets. I would lock Layard's counter-inflation tax in a cupboard for emergency use only, and concentrate on some of his longer-term supply-side policies - such as improving labour mobility by restoring a market in rented housing and restricting access to, and the duration of, unemployment benefits. It is under cover of these that some further reflation could successfully be attempted. Finally, I would avoid treating the NAIRU concept with such reverence. It can be a useful tool of thought, but never an exact criterion of policy.

Backstage at a pantomime

Roy Jenkins

RODNEY TYLER
Campaign: The selling of the Prime Minister
25pp. Grafton. £10.95 (paperback, £6.95).
0 246 13257 4

The exclamation mark in the title is presumably intended to indicate that this is breathless history: written fast, printed quick and on the bookshelves within five weeks of the event. The style is appropriately urgent. Yet the result is curiously satisfactory. The book is both readable and informative, with the quality of the electoral narrative little if at all inferior to that in Theodore White's famous *Making of the President* series.

Rodney Tyler is, however, attempting to do something different from the late Mr White. While White was trying to be objective in scope as well as in judgment, and to tell the story of each presidential contest from both sides of the battlefield, Tyler sets out to write only from one side of the hill, and even on that side he confines his attention to the commander-in-chief and her immediate staff. Outlying divisional commanders are treated as wholly peripheral, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for example, only as the recipient of an instruction to get his haircut.

The enemy camps are treated with an attempt at professional respect. There is no question of visiting them to report on morale and organization, but nor is there any question of denouncing them with moral indignation or denying them their tactical successes. Tyler indeed has a vested interest in making them appear stronger at certain stages of the campaign than they in fact were. Otherwise dramatic tension could not have been maintained.

Yet the result of the 1987 election, he finally gives the impression, could not easily have been otherwise. He writes somewhat from the standpoint of a fair-minded observer of a British African campaign a hundred years ago. The Zulus at times fought splendidly. The panache



From *Constant Exposure* by Paul Trevor (151pp with 68 black-and-white illustrations. Proper Pictures, 7 Philip House, Henegate St, London E1. Paperback, £9.95. 1 870 481 00 3).

of their attacks made Sir Garnet quite jumpy, but his nerve held and the poor devils could not really have been expected to link against the massive superiority of advertising firepower (although there was some difficulty in getting the Saatchi guns pointing in the right direction) and the even greater superiority of white blood and the values learnt on the playing-fields of the London Business School.

It would be quite wrong to see Tyler as an objectionably partisan writer. First, he gives us almost excessive warning. "I am eternally grateful to the Prime Minister for agreeing to the interview which forms the bulk of the last chapter", he writes. "It is no secret that I am a great admirer of hers and it is in that context that any criticisms I have are made." Then he proceeds to tell his story in a way that is never offensive and only occasionally cloying. So persuasive is he that I found myself getting

emotionally involved on Mrs Thatcher's side, desperately wanting her to win at any rate her internal battle with those who were trying to keep the guns pointing in the wrong direction.

It must be understood that of the characteristics of an all-purpose pantomime/fairy-story, sufficiently compendious to allow all characters to be amalgamated and all metaphors mixed, Mrs Thatcher herself was clearly both Cinderella and Puss-in-Boots. But an almost equally important character was the young nobleman, Lord "David and the Beanstalk" Young. He was assisted by another romantic character hitherto unknown in me called "Laughing Tim" Bell, who had, however, allowed the Saatchi operation to slip out of his control. (This led to the unfortunate problem of the line-of-sight of the guns.)

There was a looming quasi-villain in the

shape of Norman "The Assassin" (as he is apparently known to his political intimates) Tebbit. He seemed to be mixed up in the misdirection of the guns business, and might have had to be slain in order to free the princess. However, it turned out that he was not a villain at all, just in the wrong job. The fact that the princess herself had put him there is rather skated over, but I suppose that no one can be right all the time. She had come to think that he could not run a wheel-stall (and Conservative Central Office was an emporium on a bigger scale than this) but she had almost total faith in his potentiality as a philosopher king. As, however, the nearest he was invited to get to philosophy was to do some strungling down Chingford way, this did not greatly help.

Without Lord David I do not know what would have happened. He got hold of a new fire-plan drawn up by Laughing Tim, out-maneuvred the philosopher king, who was probably being questioned by the Chingford police, and confronted those who were perverting the Sanchi spirit by asking them the ultimate question of what they thought their shares were worth on Friday morning if the princess were not freed. Having won this testing intellectual interexchange he was then able to move into the almost uncharitably moving aria, "We are here for one person - for her". On the crowning line of "If these ads are what she wants, then these ads are what she gets", the curtain was able to come down on the penultimate act and the drama was almost over.

Mrs Thatcher went on to perform the feat, unprecedented at least since the first Reform Bill, of winning three consecutive general elections. Mr Tyler pays inadequate regard to the effect of a split opposition under the British electoral system on these victories. Had 43 per cent of the vote then guaranteed victory, Churchill would have had no difficulty in surviving in 1945. Her feat is none the less remarkable, and this is as good a non-analytical, worm's-eye view of how it was achieved as one has any reason to expect.

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Clubland and beyond

Roy Foster

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Democracy and Religion: Gladstone and the Liberal Party 1867-1875
504pp. Cambridge University Press. £37.50.
0521309484
EDWARD HAMILTON
The Destruction of Lord Rosebery: From the diary of Sir Edward Hamilton, 1894-1895
Edited by David Brooks
290pp. The Historians' Press, 9 Daisy Road, South Woodford, London E18. £25.
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Volume One: 1835-1885, 328 pp.
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Edited by Peter Gordon
Northamptonshire Record Society. £15 and £18 (£30 the set).
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ROBERT BLAKE and HUGH CECIL (Editors)
Salisbury: The man and his policies
298pp. Macmillan. £29.50.
0333367672

"I here are no doubt many plausible arguments in favour of the course which you adopted", wrote the governor-general of Canada, Lord Lansdowne, to Lord Spencer, outgoing Viceroy of Ireland, when the Liberal government abandoned office in 1885; "but I am afraid that the 'historian' whose verdict we always look forward to will say that you allowed yourselves to be driven out by the Tories because you knew that disruption from within was inevitable." The historians have indeed said that, and a great deal else. But what this typically thought-provoking nugget from Peter Gordon's indispensable edition of Spencer's papers principally brings home is the realization that late-Victorian politicians themselves anticipated the academic industry that has grown up around decoding their intentions.

The profuse and proliferating evidence, the numerous observers, the high-profile public rhetoric - all this allows a multiplicity of interpretations. Moreover, the cast is strictly limited. With such a small company there is an irresistible desire to switch them round into different parts and hand out a new libretto. More than a decade ago, Alistair Cooke and John Vincent did just this in *The Governing Passion: Cabinet Government and party politics in England 1885-6*. Here we found a Gladstone "marked for the axe" long before 1885, a crafty and trimming Hartington, a Randolph Churchill of impressive gravitas and insight, while reliability and wisdom were straightforwardly attributed to the muckraking gossip, Henry Labouchere.

The dust has since settled, and high-political acrobatics has found its way into the textbooks (occasionally entirely dominating them, as in Michael Bentley's iconoclastic *Politics Without Democracy*, reviewed in the TLS of November 9, 1984). But the interpretations still come -

cynical, hermeneutic or determined. The reliability of Labouchere is as hard to establish as ever.

On a higher plane, the question remains: in the last age before the professional politicians took over, what were the chief motivations of the actors within the charmed circle - conscious and unconscious? Everyone in the political clubland canonized by the books under review continually reiterated a mannered weariness with office - Rosebery, Harcourt, Morley, Salisbury, most of all Gladstone. But when one gets past the defence-works of harmless self-deception, necessary cant and Trollopian dutifulness, what lies behind?

Cooke and Vincent concentrated on the harking of parallel ambitions among a highly talented élite, in a professional world which should be seen as an enclosed community, analogous to the City or an Oxbridge college, rather than a forum polarized by ideological distinctions. (Too easily defined as neo-Peterhouse nihilism, this view is quite as assimilable to old-fashioned Marxism.) But such a view neither contradicts other interpretations nor exhausts the possibility of new ones, which will occur as long as research students receive grants. The third Marquis of Salisbury would not have liked this. According to his daughter Gwendolen, in a marvellous essay now published for the first time by Lord Blake and Hugh Cecil,

He disliked the type of history which is becoming increasingly common and popular: that in which the facts are gathered round some central idea or ideas of the author, and wherein their effect in supporting or in throwing doubt upon his theories is the aspect in which they are almost exclusively considered. "I want to know what happened, not what the man thinks", would be his irritable comment.

Salisbury would not have appreciated J. P. Parry's dense, heavyweight and deeply absorbing study of Gladstonian Liberalism. In a sense, *Democracy and Religion: Gladstone and the Liberal Party 1867-1875* uses the structure of Cooke and Vincent's *Governing Passion* to point a different moral. The first half of the book is an analysis - intellectual, interpretative, full of insight - of men and ideas. The second half treats political issues and actions in the light of the earlier emphases and conclusions. The overall effect is to reinterpret the preoccupations (and eventual failure) of Gladstonian Liberalism, restoring the importance of religious priorities and abstract moral purposes.

This is neither as crude nor as reactionary as it may sound. Parry's range of reading and breadth of reference are awe-inspiring. His work, like that of David Bebbington in *The Nonconformist Conscience* and David Hempton in *Methodism and Politics*, not only relates religious predisposition to political practice, but attempts to reconstitute the elements of a political culture. It makes possible several new perceptions, notably regarding the way that Irish issues (Disestablishment, education, eventually Home Rule) were translated into English terms. It is useful to see Gladstone's Irish university plans scuppered as much by English reactions as by Irish condemnation.

Parry is particularly good on demonstrating the compatibility of High-churchmanship and Liberalism (though when it came to the pious Gladstone's late defence of Church of England Establishment turned out to be weak, untheoretical, and cooling upon immediate political considerations). His treatment of the Whig-Liberal pedigree is full of insight. There is a valuable restoration of Carlyle to the place he must occupy in any profile of the intellectual history of mid-Victorian Britain.

However, there is not always a convincing overlap between the spheres of intellectual and political activity. According to Parry, the Victorian "statesman's task" may be defined in terms of condemning "working-class propensity to strike, breed, and drink excessively; middle-class cultural narrowness and obsession with profit; upper-class decadence and political apathy". But none of the footnote authorities cited for this conclusion (Arnold, Greg, Kingsley, Hughes, Trollope, *et al*) was a politician; and the thread spun between ideas and action does not always stretch the distance.

In many ways, Parry is better on particularities than generalizations, whose dangers he specifically realizes. There is a first-rate section on "Perceptions of Gladstone" ("Tory as he was - High Churchman as he is, and revolutionist as he will be", according to Bouvierio in 1866). But when the conclusion dramatically presents the Home Rule crisis of 1886 as the direct result of tension evident in the 1867-74 period, one shares Salisbury's disgust about historical pattern-making. Between the decline of Oldstonian Liberalism into diamitry in 1874-5, and the arrival of Home Rule on the political agenda at the end of 1885, a decade intervened - about which Parry's study is necessarily silent. But during these ten years too much happened in Westminster, in the constituencies, and across the Irish Sea, for the effects of day-to-day contingency to be so airily abandoned. Leaving aside high-political rivalries, the Liberal split over Home Rule for Ireland in 1886 certainly relates to tensions within the party's ideology twenty years previously - several of them to do with religion. But it has at least as much to do with the immediate and unforeseen effects of Parnellism, Davittism, Irish-Americanism, agricultural crisis, and franchise extension. This does not negate Parry's basic thesis, but it makes it necessarily limited. He has none the less written a study of impressive intelligence, forefulness and originality.

Unlike, for instance, J. C. D. Clark's attempt to reassert non-secular priorities to the world of political action, Parry's study embodies an extremely wide range of reference; and this includes several politicians' diaries. The usefulness of these varies. But there is general agreement that "Eddy" Hamilton's wordy Boswellizing of Gladstone and others in the 1880s and 1890s constitutes an important source; his diaries for the early 1880s have already been edited by Dudley Bahlman, and have been widely used.

What historians have in general been less ready to say is that Hamilton emerges as an obtuse today, afflicted with an Old Etonian

obsession which makes the Lyttelton-Harcourt letters look almost sane. Certainly, the selection from his 1894-5 diary now presented by David Brooks in *The Destruction of Lord Rosebery* is full of giveaways about his priorities. If Rosebery's horse wins the Derby, "I don't much care what happens. Rosebery will have achieved the greatest feat (in its way) of any Prime Minister; and perhaps then the sooner he is out of the present impossible and uncomfortable state of things the better...". Hamilton is hopped anxiously reckoning the balance of Etonians *vis-à-vis* Harrovians around the Cabinet table, or eagerly advising his adored chief on matters like Stephen Gladstone's claims to the Deanery of Winchester ("He has got quite average ability - indeed his father thinks it far above the average - and he is a very strong liberal..."). The principal drawback to his being given preference of that kind is his appearance, which is certainly not prepossessing. On the other hand, as Brooks points out, where Hamilton makes an important error of calculation in preparing the 1894 Budget, the incident does not find its way into his complacent daily record.

But this does not detract from the interest of the diary, and it is useful to have an accessible sequel to the years covered by Bahlman. Moreover, Brooks's introductory treatment of the Rosebery government (five chapters, making up nearly half of the volume) provides the real meat of the book. The Harcourt-Rosebery rivalry for succession to the Liberal premiership after Gladstone, the baroque Rosebery neurosis, the significance of taxation policy in 1894 (and the underrated influence of Lewis Harcourt) receive deft and perceptive analysis. Military and public expenditure, two rocks on which Liberalism foundered in 1895, are shown to hold out ominous portents for the future. Brooks stops his analysis too short; one wishes for more retrospect to the early 1890s, and his treatment tends to be austere behaviourist. But his thoughtful commentary places Hamilton's naive observations in a setting which enhances them possibly more than their due.

An important figure in the Harcourt-Rosebery saga, and in Hamilton's world generally, was the fifth Earl Spencer. Gladstone characteristically told him that he would have recommended him as his successor in 1894, had the Queen asked him directly, but that he could not mention him when an oblique approach was made through her secretary. Such a scenario could have been invented by Trollope, and so could Spencer. Hamilton rated him as the most efficient Admiralty First Lord ever (if "second-rate" overall); but his importance in Ireland in the early 1880s was far greater, as a decisive and intelligent Viceroy with a will who had a good political head and a sharp appreciation of Parnellite talents. They both realized that moderate Home Rule need frighten no one, and contrary to the rumours put about by infuriated Unionists, Spencer reached his own conclusions about the necessity of some kind of measure more or less at the same time as Gladstone. Clarification of this point is not the least of the services rendered to his subject by Peter Gordon, whose immaculate editing of a wide range of Spencer material has provided a genuinely important new source for the 1880s and 1890s. (His Appendix also provides a useful guide to the papers, pending their cataloguing by the British Library.)

In some ways, the Spencer volumes take us still further into the familiar, slightly stuffy atmosphere of late-Victorian Liberal drawing rooms. Gladstone trumpets on about Peel's government, the horrors of staying at Hawarden are feebly recounted ("Poor dear Mrs Gladstone and the daughters, although most kind, and all meaning excellently, are very strange, and the girls utterly devoid of all consideration for their guests"). But there is a welcome asynchrony in Spencer's own observations, as in his dislike for the Hamilton circle "swinging the censor" around the Grand Old Man. The material about Dublin Castle and its surveillance mechanisms is genuinely important; the implicit portrait of deliberately unpretentious Whiggery is memorable; and Gordon's introductions are models of their kind.

In the second of these, Gordon quotes a classic piece of bitchery from Arthur Balfour: "What an amazing creature - a creature of the first rank."

can be done in this country by a noble presence and a great hereditary position and fine personal record, assisted by intellectual parts of any kind! It is really very remarkable. Such a sweet, and even such a beautiful character, and nobility at all." This carries the authentic note of Cecil brutality, frequently captured in Robert Blake and Hugh Cecil's collection of essays on Salisbury. In the Cecil world, even after rapprochement with the Liberal Unionists in 1886, their leader the Marquis of Hartington remained "the man who betrayed Gordon" (and the agonized fifteenth Earl of Devon, who vacillated between Conservative and Liberal administrations, was crisply referred to as "Titus Oates"). This strain of robust abuse provides some of the entertainment in a fascinating collection; still more comes from the observations of Lady Gwendolen Cecil, in the essay already referred to, where her father emerges as a Jane Austen creation.

When he found himself sitting next to a stranger or as acquaintance, his first reflection was "How bored they will be" - with the inevitably resulting conviction of how bored he himself would be. He often protested on the grounds of compassion against the issue of a proposed invitation: "Poor man, what has he done that you should ask him? - he will feel himself bound to accept and he will be so bored." Conversational enjoyment was all but impossible under such circumstances.

For connoisseurs of late-Victorian political biography a unique place has long been occupied by Lady Gwendolen's uncompleted *Life of Robert, Marquis of Salisbury*, tough, feline and funny in the Cecil manner. The tone is well sustained in Hugh Cecil's essay about his great-nephew, sympathetically analysing the nature of her masterpiece, and the reasons why it was never completed. Further biographical insight into Salisbury himself is provided by F. M. L. Thompson's absorbing treatment of his landholdings - particularly concentrating on the surprising picture of Salisbury as an urban landlord. Other pieces in the collection are equally distinguished, notably Andrew Porter's essay on diplomatic history, which con-

fronts general questions of interpretation in an important general treatment of foreign policy and domestic finance, while E. D. Steele demonstrates the significance of Salisbury's experience of government in microcosm at the India Office in 1866-7 and 1874-8. John France's essay on Salisbury and the Unionist Alliance is a clever reversal of many assumptions usually taken as read; he shows a Tory party firmly set on fusion, needing and angling for Whigs before Whigs looked for refuge from Gladstone. This carries much conviction, as does Dr France's treatment of Irish policy (itself owing much to Andrew Gailley's pioneering work, recently published as *Ireland and the Death of Kindness: The experience of constructive Unionism 1890-1905*). France strikes energetically around him at predecessors who have in his view got the Conservative-Liberal Unionist balance wrong, and scores some good hits.

Otherwise, these essays delineate Salisbury's principled pessimism, seen early on in his journalism, but adulterated by the trimming enforced by nearly two decades of political power. (He told Lytton, apropos the latter's disastrous Indian policy, that absolute dogmatism was always a mistake outside the sphere of religion.) A certain degree of enigma inevitably remains. Salisbury's reputation, and his interest, owes much to his own articulateness - reflected in the pithy articles poured out for the journals in his days as an impoverished younger son, as well as in the outrageous *bons mots* of a heyday spent *à l'écart des bourgeois*. One such celebrated comment, on the idea of representative parish councils, deserves quotation: "If, among the many duties the modern state undertakes, the duty of smusing the rural population should be included, I should rather recommend a circus or something of that kind." Irony apart, the astute manipulation of rhetorical bread and circuses would become the stock-in-trade of *fin-de-siècle* Conservatism.

Equally seriously, Salisbury remarked: "Representative bodies are the fashion of the day, and against a fashion it is almost impossible to argue." Edward Hamilton used the same

inconsistent and Byronic.

Between them, these three poured out articles and pamphlets, poems and books, mostly of very indifferent quality. But it was their contact with two other figures that transformed their musings into a movement. The first was the Rev Frederick William Faber, a leading disciple of John Henry Newman, who was obsessed with the fear that the Church was in danger - yet again. And the second was Benjamin Disraeli, who soon became their leader in Parliament, and who immortalized his friends in his three matchless novels of high politics, high society and high spirits, *Coningsby*, *Sybil* and *Tancred*.

All these men were addicted to the politics of nostalgia, and hated the developments of their day, especially liberalism, utilitarianism, democracy, the middle classes, industry and manufacturing. Instead, they espoused monasticism, feudalism and paternalism, taking as their heroes Archbishop Laud, Charles I and James II, the Jacobites, Bolingbroke and Byron. Chivalrous, romantic and absurdly quixotic, they looked to a revived Church, a strengthened monarchy, a reinvigorated aristocracy and a contented proletariat as the best hope for future salvation and stability.

But they did not get very far. Their policies - which included the placing of maypoles in every village to alleviate social distress, and the revival of the Royal Touch to bring the monarchy back into closer contact with the people - were met with widespread ridicule and incredulity, and even Disraeli's novels did not sell particularly well. Although the Young Englanders provided one more obstacle for Peel on his road to parliamentary martyrdom, they could claim no major political achievement in their credit.

Above all, they lacked unity of outlook and firmness of purpose. A week may be a long time in twentieth-century politics, but in the 1840s, four years of eccentric posturing and rebellious gestures were scarcely enough for this callow cohort to accomplish anything.

concept to account for the Unionist victory in 1895. "I am sure that among the contributing causes is the fashion of Conservatism. The upper classes in recent years have become much more Conservative, and the fashion which they set filters down from one class to another." This raises questions of political language which preoccupy Parry's study, as well as posing the problem of Liberalism's loss of that hegemony which it had apparently created by the 1870s. In 1894, Hamilton describes Gladstone at Hawarden, "never ceasing rejoicing at feeling himself a free man. He made one remark with great emphasis, and that related to the 'class-riddenness' of this country. He thought it was marvellous how the country had stood it." Parry points out that Liberal anxieties about "class" and its divisiveness sought answers in spiritual reconciliation rather than in economic or hurenergetic readjustment.

Late nineteenth-century Cecilian Conservatism took a more materialist line, and was accordingly more successful; other elements in the party combined this with adept obeisances to popular opinion (in occasion collectivists as well as imperialists) in a manner that has not yet been effectively analysed. Flaxley violently accused Gladstone of "slavishly following average opinion [when] government by average opinion is merely a circuitous method of going to the devil". Salisbury, who would have agreed, proved more adept at capitalizing on "average opinion" than anyone could have anticipated. Early on in his *Quarterly Review* days he had decided that the basic political battle was one "not of parties but of classes"; "the struggle between property, be it *unimproved small or great*, and mere numbers". Yet the process whereby so much small property abandoned Liberalism for Conservatism remains largely unexplored. There has been much historical concentration on Salisbury, his colleagues and his opponents; the books under review are notable additions to a distinguished genre. But rather less attention has been paid to "average opinion"; and this may contain many of the answers to the questions raised by seismic shifts in political culture and political affiliation, then or now.

They found it difficult to put forward an agreed programme, they split irrevocably over the repeal of the Corn Laws, and they were further undermined when Faber went over to Rome. Not surprisingly, Disraeli gradually distanced himself from these politically pubescent colleagues, who lacked his staying power and his genius for survival and success.

All this is pleasantly enough told, and the author's family piety - he is the great-great-nephew of Father Faber - does not blind him to the very considerable limitations of the group whose antics and activities he so vividly evokes. He is particularly successful in conveying their rich and preposterous amalgam of ecclesiastical flummery, historical make-believe and social self-deception; and he captures the tone of unfulfilled homosexuality and rampant misogyny, sublimated into religious bigotry, by which such obscurantist groups seem invariably to be blighted.

Indeed, in the end, Young England achieved even less than Faber would have believed. On the social habits, aesthetic values, political opinions and moral sensibilities of their time, the impact of the group was never more than minimal. And, in the light of the work of Robert Blake, Maurice Cowling and Paul Smith, it is simply absurd for the author to claim that Disraeli's mature policies of social and parliamentary reform were the long-intended implementation of his deeply held Young England beliefs.

Throughout, this excessively well-disposed book, what is basically lacking is any real sense of historical perspective. There is no attempt to see Young England for what it actually was - namely the more ephemeral episode from that long catalogue of forlorn hopes and tragicomic immaturity, which runs from Jacobitism, via the Fourth Party, to Belfrage and Chesterton, and on to the Young (and sometimes not so young) Fogies of our own time. "Stripped of their period charm", Richard Faber rather impudently informs us, Young England "can still be taken seriously today." But by whom?

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S E C K E R & W A R B U R G

A plan for Africa

Robert Harms

CHINWEIZU
Decolonising the African Mind
294pp. Lagos: Perse; distributed by Sundoor.
DCM fls 4658. London WC1N 3XX. £25
(paperback, £12.50).
978 2651016

A quarter of a century has now passed since the majority of African nations gained political independence, and observers both inside and outside Africa are assessing the results. Chinweizu, a Nigerian who signs his essays with a single name, finds the achievements of independent Africa disappointing. Both the United States and the Soviet Union, he notes, accomplished substantial industrial transformations in roughly thirty years, but African efforts at nation-building and economic development have yielded little in comparison. The problem, Chinweizu believes, is that the colonial mentality still lies like a fog on the African consciousness. Only if the African mind is freed from alien control, he argues, can African creativity be released to create a renovated African culture that is consistent with both its own traditions and the demands of an industrial economy.

Decolonising the African Mind is a collection of newspaper columns, articles, book reviews, letters to the editor, and speeches written by Chinweizu between 1981 and 1987. Despite the diverse origins of the essays, the collection as a whole displays a remarkable consistency of thought. The book is dedicated to W. E. B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, Cheikh Anta Diop, Amílcar Cabral and Frantz Fanon, thinkers whose influence is evident in the essays. Chinweizu is well equipped to challenge the West on its own intellectual ground. His academic background includes mathematics, history, philosophy, economics and American studies at the State University of New York at Buffalo and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Since returning to Nigeria, he has edited a literary journal, published two books of poetry, written history and literary criticism, and

served as economics and business editor for the *Lagos Guardian*.

Although these essays are aimed primarily at African audiences, Western readers will find Chinweizu's ideas stimulating and provocative, in part because he often rejects approaches that are currently fashionable in the West. While Western historians are concentrating on peasants and practitioners, he focuses on great men and great civilizations. While Western writers and critics explore the forms and uses of language, he calls for heroic literature and didactic criticism. While Western scholars play down racial differences, he emphasizes racial categories. Chinweizu's views are reminiscent of ideas that were being advocated in the Western nations when they were undergoing their own industrial transformations. And that, of course, is his point: Africans should focus on ideas that help them to create an industrial culture. The intellectual fashions of the post-industrial West may be irrelevant or detrimental to African needs.

Chinweizu believes that colonial historiography, which taught that Africans had contributed nothing to their own or any other civilization, encouraged a passivity and fatalism among African intellectuals, who have come to see progress in terms of importing ideas and goods from the West. To counter this, he proposes the study of African history as a kind of cultural therapy. His decolonized history would be elitist, nationalist and racially conscious. The elitist strain is evident in his emphasis on great civilizations, especially the literate cultures of ancient Egypt and the middle Niger. His nationalism is revealed in his admiration for empire-builders such as the Pharaohs of Egypt and Shaka of the Zulu. The final component is a racial consciousness that presents the history of Africa in terms of black achievement and white efforts at destabilization and hegemony. In his view, Africa has been fighting a fourteen-century war against Arab hegemony and a five-century war against the Europeans. He nevertheless avoids blaming all of Africa's troubles on outsiders, advocating instead an analysis of the ways in which Africa's elites have contributed to its plight.

Whatever victories Africans may have won against their invaders, Chinweizu argues that they have lost the cultural battle. Educated African élites, he believes, are trapped in Western paradigms of thought, and even those who rebel against the colonial legacy do so by embracing Marxism or militant Islam, both products of white civilization. The results have

been a loss of self-esteem among African intellectuals and a decline of cultural and political initiative. To counter these problems, Chinweizu calls for a "communal exorcism" of alien influences. He wants to drive white invaders, Arabs and Afrikans alike, from African soil and create a new literate and scientific culture which serves African objectives. He remains vague as to what those objectives are, but they certainly include economic and military power.

Literature, he believes, should serve nationalist and pan-African causes. Because literature provides a common idiom for communication and expression, it can facilitate dialogue among Africans about their history and destiny. It should affirm African cultural identity, celebrate important events in African history and illuminate ongoing social transformations. Above all, it should show that the formation of nations and civilizations is a willed act, and not a product of fate. To accomplish these goals, he urges African writers to avoid the stylistic obscurity that characterizes Euro-modernist literature as well as the proletarian focus and wooden style of Marxist writing.

Literary critics have their own contributions to make to an African cultural renaissance. Modern critical theory, with its emphasis on the autonomy of the text, is seen by Chinweizu as an effort to strip literature of its social relevance and power. Marxist criticism, with its claims to proletarian universalism, is, he believes, incapable of understanding uniquely African problems and themes. He wants African literary criticism to situate literary works within the history and literary traditions of its African audiences and to illuminate the social and philosophical issues that the works address. He wants scholars with strong pan-Africanist leanings to re-evaluate contemporary African literature from an Afro-centric perspective.

Cultural nationalism cannot flower, Chinweizu believes, until Africa is free from cultural control mechanisms that impede its creativity. One of them is the Nobel Prize, which he calls a "bewitching instrument for Euro-imperialist intellectual hegemony". It tempts African writers to write for European critics rather than for African audiences. In contrast to the African intellectuals who rejoiced at Wole Soyinka's recent Nobel Prize for literature, Chinweizu sees it as a case of "the undesirable rewarding the unreadable". A similar institution is the Olympic Games, which, he argues, extend European hegemony over

sport. Africans should stop feeling flattered to be guests of European institutions that masquerade as world institutions. They should offer their own literary prizes and transform the Olympics into the world games that they claim to be. Finally, he proposes a Black World League of Nations to help Africa escape the hegemony of the European-dominated United Nations and the Arab-influenced Organization of African Unity.

The goal of all this cultural nationalism is to build up the confidence of African intellectuals and unleash African creativity to create industrial societies. Chinweizu is contemptuous of African governments which build expensive infrastructures with borrowed funds and then expect "development" to occur. He likens them to the cargo cults of Melanesia in which natives built piers and airstrips in the belief that ships and planes loaded with manufactured goods would automatically follow. The result of "cargo-cult maldevelopment", he notes, is that most African nations are in debt peonage to the West. He believes that industrialization is fundamentally a cultural and social transformation that can be attained only with tremendous effort. The capitalists and commissars who led those transformations in the West had to overcome a seemingly endless storm of social resistance in order to create industrial cultures. African leaders, he believes, must do the same if modernization is to occur.

But those who would focus on the achievements of great civilizations and great powers should also look at the people who bear the costs. The Pharaohs could not have built their magnificent monuments without the labour of innumerable peasants and slaves. Shaka's Zulu Empire was the product of both genius and tyranny. The industrial West was built on crushed peasants and exploited workers. Ironically, in underplaying the burdens that his vision would place on Africa's rural communities, Chinweizu overlooks the creative energy of the very places where the colonial mentality is weakest. Agricultural economists are now suggesting that the common African practice of interplanting up to twenty different crops in a single field represents a stunning achievement in scientific and ecological understanding. Similarly, unilineal kinship systems developed in rural villages represent triumphs of African social thought. Perhaps it is the peasants of rural Africa, even more than the Pharaohs of ancient Egypt, who will provide the inspiration for Africa's future.

Problems in paradise

James Clifford

RONALD WRIGHT
On Fiji Islands
257pp. Viking, £10.95.
0570 80634 X

The islands of the Pacific have long been sites of Western desire and disillusionment: paradise recovered and lost, over and over. The most recent Pacific falls from innocence are political. Vanuatu (formerly the New Hebrides) makes initial contact with the Soviets. The Melanesian independence movement in New Caledonia sends a delegation to Libya. New Zealand bans American ships carrying atomic arms and is excluded from the ANZUS alliance. France's nuclear tests are widely denounced, the "Rainbow Warrior" sunk. Australia ejects Libyans. Throughout the region, rumours circulate about the KGB and CIA.

The coup d'état in Fiji last May was another sign of trouble in paradise. Acting on behalf of a Native Fijian minority, and with the sympathy of the Great Council of Chiefs, Lieutenant-Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka ousted at gunpoint a recently elected cabinet led by Timoci Bavadra and favoured to the Fijian Indian majority. Fiji had been a model Third World nation, relatively prosperous, democratically viable, a pro-Western bulwark. On his visit last autumn, Pope John Paul called its multiracial society "a symbol of hope in the world". Colonel Rabuka (quickly dubbed "Rambo" by the press) changed that. He was clearly not troubled by constitutional niceties and did not shrink from inciting violent intimidation of the Indian population. The Fijian Republic began to resemble a stereotypical Latin American country ruled by junta, or a one-party African State.

Most press reports of these events have been superficial. Readers of the *New York Times*, for example, were told little about the ousted cabinet except that it was supported by Fijian Indians. (The cabinet consisted of seven Indians and five native Fijians, including the Prime Minister.) Nowhere was it mentioned that Bavadra's new government, perceived as "leftist" in some quarters, posed an obstacle to plans for relocating New Zealand bases in Fiji. (The widespread suspicions of CIA complicity in the coup thus made at least symbolic sense.) Accounts of a purely racial conflict, Indians against Fijians, glossed over long-standing differences between major native power bases. (Bavadra is from western Viti Levu, a traditional centre of Fijian resistance to the dominant chiefly structures of the east.) Press reports missed the appeal of the Labour-oriented Bavadra government to younger voters of both races. That the new order posed a popular threat to older oligarchies and to the departing Alliance Party, widely suspected of corruption, was all but invisible.

It is too early to expect a full account of last May's events. For now, cautious outsiders will have to suspend judgment while paying attention to whatever concrete, informed accounts from the region are available. Ronald Wright's well-researched travel book, *On Fiji Islands*, a view of the situation just prior to Rabuka's takeover, offers a good introduction to Fijian culture and history. Events have overtaken the book. Its optimistic conclusions are shadowed. And it is hard, after the coup, not to be troubled by its selective image of island society. But despite these limitations (of which more later), *On Fiji Islands* offers a sensitive view of the mix of tradition and modernity in a complex Pacific nation.

Ronald Wright is trained in social anthropology and has published a widely praised travel book on Peru. He knows his way around South America and parts of Africa. From the moment of his arrival in Nadi (Western Viti Levu) he feels a difference: "Everybody's clean and nobody wears guns", a travelling companion points out. Wright recalls the poverty and tension that had first struck him in Lianji. In Fiji everything seems neat and tranquil. "The hotel did not seem to be on an island built for foreigners in a sea of squalor", he notes with something like astonishment. Wright has already heard that in Fiji a depressingly common Third World experience of "dispossession, exploitation and social decay" has somehow been avoided. Fijians have dealt flexibly and inven-

tively with a European expansion that elsewhere had devastating consequences. Several months in the region, reinforced by considerable historical research, confirm and complicate Wright's first impressions.

On *Fiji Islands* falls within a recognizable sub category of the travel genre: books concerned with the moral condition of post-colonial societies. It largely avoids the familiar, disenchanted outlook of V. S. Naipaul and other critics of a ruined Third World. Perhaps more unusual, its openness to re-enchantment does not derive from a nostalgia for uncorrupted pre-contact societies. The distinctly Fijian ambience Wright comes to appreciate is not archaic; it is fully involved in the late twentieth century. At his first traditional kava-drinking ceremony: "Village sounds outside the house: chickens, children, a distant radio playing the sugary harmonies of Fijian pop; once or twice the mysterious syncopated sounding of a wooden drum, crisp and urgent, like a call to war. And exactly on the hour, a chime from Senitiki's watch."

Accompanied by a Canadian and a Fijian friend, Wright treks across the highlands of Viti Levu. Entertained in an isolated village by the local chief, he is charmed by the mix of banter and decorum, the small rituals, the late-night storytelling and kava-drinking of Fijian

male society. (Fijian women do not figure in Wright's account except as discreet providers of food and household services; like many other travellers and ethnographers he is firmly positioned by gender.) Wright looks for and finds "voluntary acculturation". For example, in mountain villages he notes that trunks and chests, Western furniture useful for storage, have been adopted, but not tables and chairs; social relations still take place at floor level. In the tradition of observant travel writing he extracts significance from small things — as when he stumbles over a lawn-mower in a darkened bedroom.

So this was the secret of all those well-trimmed *varas* (village greens). As I soon discovered, a Fijian village, like a Canadian suburb, hums with the sound of mechanical mowing once a week. In other Third World villages I have known, the job is done by starving goats, which remove all greenery and leave their dung in return. But Fijians keep only cattle near pigs, and they do not encourage them to come near the homes of men. Cutting the village grass is an ancient chore, and bedrooms are the traditional place for storing tools. Mower has superseded scythe, but the cultural pattern endures.

In the above quotation, and from time to time throughout the book, native Fiji is set in opposition to other Third World places, the latter almost always associated with dirt, dis-

order and demoralization. The tactic is misleading; whatever the condition of their village greens, many indigenous groups all over the world are practising voluntary acculturation (and selective rejection) in their relations with Western culture. Fiji is distinctive, but it is certainly not, as Wright sometimes implies, a miraculous exception. Be that as it may, the positive image in *On Fiji Islands* of a changing indigenous society maintaining balance, style and self-esteem in disruptive colonial and post-colonial contexts, is persuasively and concretely presented.

Wright is not merely an acute observer of social and natural settings. He also gives clear accounts of the major historical events associated with the places he visits. The eighteenth and nineteenth-century historical record is rich in personality and drama. Fiji was no timeless primitive world, its equilibrium shattered by the advent of Western power. Ambitious chiefs waged large-scale campaigns. Westerners with their guns, markets, government and religion used and were used by these Fijian forces. The consolidation of highly organized chiefly structures in much of the archipelago turned out to be compatible with British indirect rule. Thus the "traditional" society currently represented by the Great Council of Chiefs is in part a product of flexible interac-

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On the right lines

Tom Phillips

GEORGES MEURANT
Shoowa Design: African textiles from the
Kingdom of Kuba
206pp. Thames and Hudson, £25.
0 501 97331 8

In the old simple days of African art-collecting, what are now referred to as Shoowa cut-pile embroideries used to be called Kuba cloths or Kuba Velvets; for so fine was the raised raffia work on these intriguing textiles, with their tight yet idiosyncratic geometrical designs, that it felt like velvet in the touch. The other great textiles to come out of the Kuba kingdom are what used to be called Kuba skirts but which, in their turn, we have had to learn to call by their proper name, Ngungu women's dance-skirts. With their immense length (up to 50 feet) and their whimsical alternations of simplicity and complexity, order and randomness, these dramatic cloths look as if they were Paul Klee's answer to the Bayeux Tapestry. The Kuba kingdom is in the middle of the Congo, and as greater light is shed on the fastnesses of the heart of darkness we learn that even to speak of the Kuba in general is a bit sloppy, since Kuba is the Luo word for describing the Bushong.

Likely, this trailing and changing of names which so bedevils books on African art has no effect on its objects, which speak clearly of the great sophistication, humour and high creativity of traditional African design. Georges Meurant acknowledges this by making his

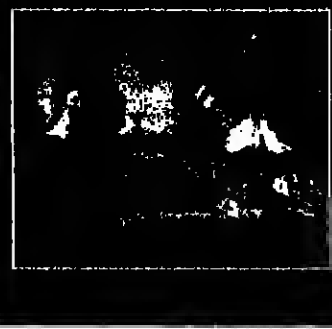
ning of Shoowa Design as a sequence of a hundred or so excellent reproductions uninterrupted by any text: the sensitive printing, which uses a discreet formalized shadow to give body to the cloths, makes the book good value even before the reader has read a word of the text. This is fortunate since the text makes many assertions that are open to question, supported by pages of comparative diagrams which often seem to lead to quite opposite conclusions to those of the author.

Meurant is an artist and an enthusiast; many of the cloths illustrated in this monograph come from his own collection. His enthusiasm transmits itself well when he describes the makers and the techniques of embroidery, yet when he comes to the problematic business of graphic analysis in his extended section on "morphogenesis" he is too prone to improvise his own links and connections, relying on a limited range of secondary sources. There is no evidence of firsthand fieldwork to support his theories. At the heart of his argument is the premise that design elements must all be the results of influence, even simple geometrical tropes based on the lozenge and the chevron. He cites European influences far such design universals as the chequerboard pattern, and treats all cross-cultural coincidences more on the lines of conspiracy theory. It would seem more logical to say that, in the archaic equivalents of telephone boxes, doodling men would have come up with most of the basic patterns that line and alternation (together with man's instinct to "fill in" to make designs) give rise to. It would be no messenger from the past to tell us that the patterns of the Kuba are the result of a long and

direction make nice patterns.

Read abstractly (and other readings are largely conjectural) Kuba design builds up a fairly strict grid, most often based on the lattice and lozenge, and shoots it through with interference patterns, occasionally subverting the whole system with some unexpected elements or an anomalous colour. That there are ways of "reading" contained within these designs seems certain, yet we are in dangerous research territory very similar to that which trapped the eager Mrs Meyrovitz when she questioned informants among the Ashante as to the significance of the ribbed and cutwoven designs on Akan gold weights. Most Africans like to please and were happy to confirm Meyrovitz's theories. How could they but say "yes" to a question like "This spiral with rays coming out must be something to do with the power of the sun; am I on the right lines?" Thus the obliging informants whom she thanks in her introduction to *Ashanti Gold Weights* helped her out of kindness to write pages of nonsense.

Perhaps all we can say is that there is a limit to the possibilities of the doodlable elements and that the Kuba, over a few centuries described this limit. The most outstanding (and enviable) tool the African artist has is an amplitude of time. These often quite small cloths can take almost a year to make; plenty of time to make the new small variation that keeps the tradition rich. Fortunately the word "primitive" is going out of use to describe the art of tribal societies. No word could be less well suited to these ingenious embroideries and we should express our gratitude to Georges Meurant for focusing our attention on them.

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Gabriel Josipovici

MANUEL PROUST
the Reading Ruskin: Prefaces to "La Bible d'Amiens" and "Sésame et les Lys", with selections from the notes to the translated texts. Edited and translated by Jean Autret, William Hurford and Phillip J. Wolfe. 252pp. Yale University Press, £13.50 (0 30018136)

It says something about British insularity that two of the greatest literary essays written this century have only recently become available in English. "On Reading", Proust's introduction to his translation of Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies*, first appeared in 1971 in a limited edition, and now Yale have brought it out together with the introduction to Proust's other Ruskin translation, *The Bible of Amiens*, along with the very full set of notes Proust compiled for each work. They have been expertly edited and translated and the volume is introduced by a brilliant forty-page essay and a fascinating bibliographical note by Richard Macksey. It is an event for celebration.

But how, it may be asked, can a bibliography be fascinating? The answer is, if it concerns Proust. "L'oeuvre inédite de Proust n'existe pas", Bernard de Fallois has observed, and Macksey points out that "like all writings, the studies that Proust dedicated to Ruskin during the first years of this century constitute a complicated fabric of redactions, partial publications, and internal quotations. Even the titles... are unstable, undergoing transformations as they pass from journal to preface to *mélange*." Everything Proust wrote was used again and again and gradually transformed as he slowly moved towards the creation of his one great work, where all he had ever felt, thought and written finally found its rightful form and place.

The great renunciation which was to lead to the future triumph was the laying aside of *Jeune Sémillante* when more than a thousand pages of that fine Jamesian novel were done. Had it been published, Proust would never have been able to write *A la Recherche*, which is so different and yet so similar. As Maurice Blanchot has pointed out, it took great courage for Proust to suppress it in the face of pressures from his family and friends and no doubt from within to prove that he was not a total loyabour. And the years that followed were hard ones. Like Dante between the *Vita Nuova* and the *Commedia*, Proust, dissatisfied with what seemed to him the frivolity of fiction, turned his hand to scholarship, criticism and aesthetics, leaving a trail of unfinished work behind

Urbs and suburbs

David Grylls

GEORGE GISSING
Veranilda
Edited by Pierre Coustillas
348pp. Brighton: Harvester, £35.
07408 05381

As Gissing lay dying in 1903, he muttered deliriously about *Veranilda*, his uncompleted historical romance set in sixth-century Italy. Despite some dutiful eulogies on its posthumous publication, the book has never enjoyed the esteem of his novels of nineteenth-century life. Gissing believed it would be "a strong book dramatically, and at the same time a very faithful picture of the times". The first aspiration was certainly unfulfilled: though occasionally lurching into melodrama, *Veranilda* stays dramatically inert. Recounting the romance of the Roman noble Basil and the Gothic maiden Veranilda in an Italy corruptly controlled from Byzantium but being reconquered by Totila the Goth, its narrative line is thin and flimsy, a loose skein of sentiment and virtuous intrigue. Stylistically, too, the book seems uneven. Sober, lucid passages of historical exposition alternate with bursts of melodrama ("he shall pay for the lie with an arrow through the chest and a gladius"). The characters are mostly uninteresting, especially the staleness heroine, who, with her "water-bright eyes" and "some young and aptitude for nursing" ("her touch on the hot

him, before he finally understood that it was not fiction that was winning but only his own conception of it. And, like Dante, his years of study of other men's thoughts and deeds helped give the final fiction, when it eventually came, that unique combination of the lyric and the encyclopaedic which is characteristic of their work.

Proust began reading Ruskin in 1899 and finally abandoned him in 1906, when his translation of *Sesame and Lilies* was published. Ruskin himself had died in 1900, followed by Proust's father in 1903 and his mother in 1905. They were vital years in the making of the novelist. Ruskin's sense of the importance of place, his endless curiosity about the works of nature and man, his passion for the Middle Ages, his roots in Wordsworth, all gave Proust something he badly needed, and helped free him from the sterile aestheticism so prevalent in nineteenth-century France. Indeed, Proust's immersion, alone of all his French contemporaries, in nineteenth-century English literature, in George Eliot and Hardy as well as Ruskin, gave him access to a vein of Romanticism deeper and more genuine than anything found in the French tradition. It reinforced his own feeling that the world was a place of wonder if only we knew how to look, and that one did not have to travel to exotic places to be moved; and it gave him confidence in his intuition that art did not have to be either the product of purely private fantasies or of a massive deployment of will-power in the rendering of the surface of the world, as it was for Flaubert. On the contrary, art would only be valid if it was a joy to make, and the test that one was on the wrong track was precisely that one was taking no pleasure in the making. There is in the later Proust, as in Hardy and George Eliot and Ruskin, a massive confidence in the outside world and one's place in it, though Proust had to work hard and long to acquire that confidence, and he combines its expression with a wit quite alien to his English mentors.

The Bible of Amiens is one of the greatest guide-books ever written. Ruskin's passion not just for the cathedral but for the countryside in which it is set, his extraordinary feeling for the interaction of people and place, awakens an echo in Proust and leads, for example, to his memorable contrast of the Virgin of Amiens and the Mona Lisa:

A statue is thus forever part of a particular place on earth, of a certainty, that is to say a thing which has a name as a person has, which is an individual, of which no other exactly alike can ever be found on the face of the continents... Such a statue perhaps has something less universal than a work of art; it holds us, at any rate, by a tie stronger than that of the work of art itself, one of those ties such as persons

forehead is like that of a flower plucked before sunrise), comes across as a costumed emissary from Victorian suburbia.

This foreground fuzziness is especially regrettable since the book's historical background is often brilliantly sketched. A lifelong classicist of formidable erudition, Gissing—as Pierre Coustillas convincingly shows—had thoroughly mastered his sources. Elegiacally attracted to imperial decay, he evokes a Rome of desecrated temples and swamps seeping from smashed aqueducts. Within this landscape of incongruities—aristocrats reduced to indigence, monks and brigands coexisting in the mountains—relics of Gissing's familiar obsessions are discernible. Misogyny shadows female idealization of women; the heroine is contrasted with a cunning courtesan and a shrill-voiced vixen called Muscula. Emotional suffering is minutely analysed. Both Basil and his treacherous friend Marcian are racked by guilt and mental anguish, febrile fluctuations of intention and mood. The subtle tracing of Marcian's jealousy would alone make *Veranilda* worth reading—preferably in this excellent (though overpriced) new edition. Professor Coustillas's introduction and notes display a precision of scholarship that matches the author's own researches; his study of the manuscript and of Gissing's materials will be valuable for anyone with an interest in historical fiction. *Veranilda* deserves its resurrection. Though the novel is certainly no masterpiece, this is a masterly edition.

and countries hold us by... In my room a photograph of the Mona Lisa retains only the beauty of a masterpiece. Near her a photograph of the Virgin Dorée takes on the sadness of a souvenir.

The thought that a souvenir might have more meaning than a masterpiece goes against the entire Western aesthetic tradition, but once it has been articulated it cannot be denied. The insight was to be developed by Benjamin in his thoughts on aura, and popularized by John Berger. Here it leads Proust to write some wonderful pages not only on the Virgin Dorée but also on the little carving up in the cathedral roof, unseen for centuries but resurrected by Ruskin's eye and imagination:

He made a drawing of it; he spoke of it. And the harmless and monstrous little figurine will have come back to life, against all hope, from that death which seems more total than the others, which is the disappearance into the midst of infinite numbers and the leveling down of similarities, but from which genius quickly rescues us... I was touched on finding the figurine there again; nothing therefore dies that has survived, no more the sculptor's thought than Ruskin's thought.

The translations were an arduous business, for Proust's English was poor; but he sought help wherever he could and he was driven by the best of all teachers, passion. The notes were an important part of the enterprise. There Proust tried to give the reader the sense he would have got from reading these works with a thorough knowledge of the rest of Ruskin's work behind him. For Proust sensed that Ruskin, like Balzac and Hugo, was only apparently a rambling writer, that beneath the diversity lay a profound unity, and he saw it as his task to bring this out. The role such a notion was to play in *A la Recherche* is well known. At the same time the sheer labour required by his project inculcated in Proust that habit of hard work which seems so foreign to Marcel but which of course lies behind the great novel. More than one kind of lesson was therefore learnt from the Master.

Yet the time was to come when Ruskin would start to seem a little false, a little limited. Macksey makes the excellent point that Proust's relations to the artists he admired tended to follow the same lines as Marcel's to the women he loved. Where a Swann could dismiss the entire experience of his passion for Odette with the words "she was not my type", what distinguished both Marcel and Proust himself was that no profound experience was ever seen by them as wasted. "On Reading" is Proust's meditation on why Ruskin was not, in the end, "his type". The essay works through a series of apparent paradoxes: that the days we recall most vividly from our childhood are precisely those we spent immersed in books; that art is not a conversation with the best minds of the past, as Ruskin thought, but something much deeper, much closer to the erotic than the ethical, a solitary communion with the essence of a unique other; that if reading is thus more than Ruskin imagined, it is also less, for a book should be a threshold, not a shrine, it should help one discover one's own potential, not be the object of sterile worship. Thus Proust frees himself from what he sees as Ruskin's tendency to idolatry and fetishism, and he does this not by suppressing but by "placing" such tendencies. Eventually he will fully place them by embodying them in the person of Charles Swann.

What is extraordinary and has not so far as I know been remarked, is that the shape of the essay follows the contours of the great novel, as though that work were already present, just waiting to be kissed into life. It begins with the bliss of childhood evoked, develops into an examination of the paradoxes of interpretation, and ends with the discovery of how the original bliss can be recaptured as the past is lived again in the present. In the novel the final image is of the self as a man on stilts reaching back into Time; here it is of the two columns in the Piazzetta of St Mark standing tall and silent in the midst of the teeming crowds of tourists, an image both of the presence of the past and of the place of books in life.

Proust emerges from these essays and notes as one of the truly great critics. We respond to him, as a critic, because we grow to trust his perceptions as a man. Many will no doubt read these essays as adjuncts to *A la Recherche*. But they are also masterpieces in their own right. It is good to have them in English at last, and so ably presented.

Critic as crime-writer

Humphrey Carpenter

J.I.M. STEWART
Myself and Michael Innes: A memoir
206pp. Gollancz, £12.95.
0575 041048

In Michael Innes's *The Journeying Boy* (1949), the narrator refers ironically to "that milder sensational fiction, nicely top-dressed with a compost of literature and the arts, which is produced by idle persons living in colleges and rectories". The irony derives from the fact that Michael Innes is J. I. M. Stewart of Christ Church, Oxford, formerly a member of the English faculties at Leeds, Adelaide and Queen's, Belfast. The creator of Appleby, the detective never short of a literary allusion, is also the author of such solid critical works as *Eight Modern Writers* in the Oxford History of English Literature series.

That the two caps do not fit altogether easily on the same head—that there might be a Dodgson/Carroll split between Stewart and Innes—is suggested by the title of this autobiography. The book itself rather avoids the issue, cloaking everything under a donnish whimsicality of tone which fends off speculation about the inner reaches of personality. There are family photographs, but in the text a bare minimum of references to wife and children, while for an account of his own childhood Stewart concentrates on Edinburgh Academy—a schooling he has in common with R. L. Stevenson, whose *Kidnapped* has evidently been a huge influence on the Michael Innes stories.

Like Stevenson, Stewart was brought up among the Edinburgh New Town professional classes. "The general situation was distinctly not bookish", he remarks in one of his high-table asides. The Oxford he inhabited as an undergraduate in the late 1920s was so Victorian in character—he was befriended by the antiquated "Phelp", Provost of his college, Oriel, and in Phelps's company met a tramp who remembered the Brontës—that it is surprising to learn that he knew *The Waste Land*

Egotist as philanthropist

Robin Hope

WILLIAM CLARK
From Three Worlds: Memoirs
286pp. Sidgwick and Jackson, £13.95.
0283 993733

Historically, the more important part of *From Three Worlds* is the account of the World Bank from 1968 to 1980. William Clark arrived as its Director of Information and Public Affairs and rose to be Vice-President, External Relations. His stint coincided with Robert McNamara's tenure as its President, and the forty-six pages of these memoirs covering the period tell a loyal, even hero-worshipping lieutenant's story of how the former United States Secretary of Defense changed his spots and transformed the Bank from a sleepy, selective money-lender into a considerable engine of development for the Third World. In these years all the numbers grew twofold, threefold or more: dollars lent, dollars borrowed, countries served, staff employed, words written and spoken. From Pearson to Brandt, the record of the World Bank is an honourable one of vision, courage and hard work, of more battles won than were lost against the forces of caution, self-interest and corruption.

Some readers may find more amusement in Clark's earlier, slightly longer chapter about his job as Press Adviser to Anthony Eden at Downing Street in 1955-6. Part narrative and part diary, and purged (we are assured) of the highly coloured snippets of recollection with which the author used to entertain friends, this account belongs to the higher gossip school of memoir-writing. Nothing could be more appropriate for the tragic farce of Suze, Eden's complaints that the provincial press was going to report that there was an inaccurate story on an inside page of the *Evening Standard* (with the implication that Clark should do something about it) betray an extreme case of the Prime Minister's disease of scouring the press for comfort. Clark snatched a holiday at a crucial



J. I. M. Stewart and his mother: the photograph is reproduced from his book reviewed here.

"more or less by heart". In one of the book's few moments of self-revelation, Stewart wonders whether, in his personal relationships, he might himself not be "a sibling" of Proust.

Armed with a comfortable First in English, Stewart had a happy enough time teaching at Leeds University—where he gives a nice picture of Eliot himself, who had come to deliver a celebrity lecture, solemnly intoning against a background of heating pipes that clanked noisily for a while, and then "changed what might be called their tune. What they now suggested was nothing of a martial or of a fair-ground character. Their new suggestion was—the word must be written—indelicate." The periphrasis with which this anecdote is told is typical of *Myself and Michael Innes*, so that sometimes one wonders whether the real person behind it may not be a detective-story writer playing at being a don.

The autobiography's style, more than any facts it reveals, takes us near the heart of the question, why should a don, or at least this particular don, write detective fiction? Stewart lets out that among fellow dons he has always been "oppressively conscious" of being less

Teacher as searcher

Mansel Stimpson

ROSEMARY MANNING
A Corridor of Mirrors
234pp. Women's Press. Paperback, £5.95.
07043 40542

In 1971, before her retirement from teaching, Rosemary Manning published under a pseudonym what amounted to a slice of autobiography, concerning a lesbian relationship. That book, *A Time and a Time*, was recently reissued under her own name and with a new introduction. These facts might foster the expectation that *A Corridor of Mirrors* would be in every sense a finished autobiography. The first hint to the contrary lies in the prefatory quotation from Gertrude Stein: it expresses doubts about memory and the ability to know one's true self. Later, commenting on her own writing, Manning says: "I quarry myself", and it is clear that the process is a continuing one.

In her seventies Rosemary Manning is still developing but, more than that, she is still looking at her past, her family, her friends and herself with fresh insight and understanding. Even now there are portions of her life she cannot bring herself to write about, and she admits it. Equally one senses that her views of what she has written about may yet undergo further changes. This enhances the book, making

"intellectual" than them. Actually it is clear from his narrative that there has never been anything remotely defective in his intellect: he merely happened to be studying and teaching English at a time when that subject was in the doldrums and offered no academic discipline comparable to that of his colleagues, a situation that could easily engender an inferiority complex. Stewart's evident feeling, at least at a subconscious level, that his subject had let him down, was exacerbated by spending ten years teaching in Australia, where he quickly discovered that really clever Australians didn't become professors, and he was among amiable second-raters. Not surprisingly, Stewart began to retreat altogether from the academic waste land, and the first result was *Death at the President's Lodging* (1936).

At their best, the Michael Innes thrillers are inspired ruminations in the tradition of Stevenson and Buchan, and it is sad that the autobiography leaves the impression that Stewart has never really appreciated his own talent. His output has been prodigious—quite apart from the Innes books, and a substantial amount of critical-historical work, he has produced twenty novels and half-a-dozen books of short stories under his own name—and he has given much entertainment to more than one generation. One regrets, therefore, that *Myself and Michael Innes* has been (in his own words, of a character in one of his stories) so "artfully cadenced" as to cloak the man, or maybe the two men, who have written it.

ing clear as few autobiographies have done that we are never finished with our past. Other felicities are of a more orthodox kind: the finely drawn portrait of her parents and siblings (she was much the youngest child and the three others were boys); her view of what her own writing entails ("to tell my own truth clearly—the commission I laid upon every artist"); her forthright ideas ("I believe that teaching tends to hold back one's development in personality, in ideas and one's mental and psychological growth. Ideally no one should enter the profession under thirty, and all should leave it by forty-five"); her emotional needs which transformed her quest for the person she longed to love into a search for somebody who could supply "the recognition of my own self through her love for me".

The main weakness of *A Corridor of Mirrors* lies in the inclusion of the last five chapters, which, although clearly deeply felt, really belong elsewhere as essays or articles, as does an earlier passage about society's treatment of the elderly. In particular, Manning's responses to key issues of the 1980s, such as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the work of Amnesty International, are not sufficiently unusual to justify their place. But most of the book is personal in the best sense, living up to her assertion that "anything of worth I can offer from my own personality I want to bestow and to share".

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American notes

Christopher Hitchens

The United States is a country obsessed by credentials. It contains almost a million people who are entitled to call themselves "Professors", and even those who must be content with "Doctor" are often inclined to insist upon it. The academy is highly stratified and competitive, and recruits only from among those who are judged "qualified" in its own terms. When Daniel Bell was about to be awarded tenure in Columbia in the 1950s, it was discovered that he had no PhD. In those days it was just possible to resolve the embarrassment by granting him a retroactive one for the essays that formed *The End of Ideology*. In the 1980s, no gifted individual could expect to cross the line with such insouciance.

This process of sequestration from the mavericks has not led to any increase in academic detachment. In the 1950s, the stereotypical academic looked a bit like Nabokov's *Invitation to a Beheading*: unworldly, innocuous, absorbed in the arcane. Today, the role model more nearly resembles a character in Don DeLillo's *White Noise*: wispy, ambitious, more interested in deals and endowments and the invention of lucrative new sub-disciplines. The other noticeable difference is in the prose style, which has become more -- well -- *academic*. In a perverse manner, the new breed is more ivory tower than was the old, which could at least call upon a broad humanistic background.

In his new book, *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe*, Russell Jacoby has set himself the difficult task of defining an absence -- the want of public figures who can represent and articulate ideas and principles in America. But once this vacancy has been pointed out, it immediately looks rather conspicuous. The last generation, or at least one restricts that definition to the American-born, has produced no one to rank with Thorstein Veblen or Dwight Macdonald, Sidney Hook or Philip Rahv, Malcolm Cowley or C. Wright Mills. Although some of these made a later peace with professional university life, none of them was formed by the academy in any important sense. And it is, as Jacoby puts it, "almost ludicrous to imagine 'Professor Edmund Wilson' or 'Professor H. L. Mencksen'." The whole concept of the autonomous intellectual, self-supporting and independent-minded, has gone into an eclipse. In its place has arisen a nexus of foundations, campuses and subsidized professional journals, which give the impression more of a shopping mall for publishers and campus recruiters than of a Bohemia for aspirant writers and critics.

Jacoby concentrates his fire on the contented, self-absorbed world of the colleges, which he blames for a number of bad things

Advice unheeded

Ernest Gellner recently came across a book by a Russian general advising against the occupation of Afghanistan. The date? . . . 1921.

The message contained in this remarkable book could hardly be clearer: it is essential for the Red Army to keep out of Afghanistan. The place is both worthless and exceedingly dangerous, it has no resources to speak of, and is inhabited by an uncultured, half-savage, but ferocious and warlike population, which though lacking in all elementary discipline will unite in the name of Islam against the outsider. It would show no gratitude for being helped towards a more cultural condition. It is a country both repulsive and useless; there is only one reason for taking any interest in it: it happens to be the key to India. Except as a gateway to India, Afghanistan is best avoided.

These forthright and candid, not to say brutal, views are those of a senior officer in the Red Army, Lieutenant-General Andrey Yevgenyevich Snegurev. But no ordinary officer: one-time Commandant of the General Staff Academy, hero of the defence of Tsaritsyn (later Stalingrad, later Volgograd), Army commander, also professor and head of the Oriental Faculty of the General Staff Academy, and, for good measure, in his youth,

ranging from the assimilation of the American Left to the enervation of the national prose style. But he also mourns the decline and decay of areas like Greenwich Village and San Francisco's North Beach, where rising prices and tawdry speculative development have evicted the bookshop and the frugal apartment. As he puts it, in a nice tribute to human scale:

The merest view of society should not forget that in the lives of intellectuals -- the lives of all individuals -- it just takes several friends to make the difference; and these friends can meet in a coffeehouse in St Louis or a bookstore in Seattle. Bohemia can be this small, this vital.

I think he is right to stress the material substratum that is necessary to sustain a cultural life not dominated by money or career, and right to deplore the increasing erosion and standardization of the American downtown. Still, one of his examples may tell slightly against him. The Bohemian Grove in California, now much celebrated as the retreat of the well-heeled philistine and the mundane manipulator, was indeed founded by outsiders and literati such as Jack London, Ambrose Bierce and Mark Twain. And it did very soon begin to depend on non-literary interventions to keep itself from falling into decrepitude. Jacoby notes that Oscar Wilde remarked of the Club that he had "never seen so many well-dressed, well-fed, business-like looking Bohemians". But in retelling this, he reminds the reader that there have always been laments of this kind.

One catches the same plaintive note in some of his other observations, accurate as they certainly are, about the influence of mass television and the decline of print. These, too, are twice-told tales, though the dull standardization of output is definitely and fast increasing on a continental scale. This raises the more pressing and depressing problem of the lack of a forum. Suppose a new Dwight Macdonald was to make an appearance. Where in the forum could he set up his stand? How, once defined as "an intellectual", could he accomplish the ticklish business of acquiring a reputation as such? The only ones who currently enjoy any kind of national licence are William Buckley and Gore Vidal, both of whom are a) older generation and b) possessed of independent means and c) bewitching on television.

The two independent minds cited approvingly by Jacoby -- Russell Kirk and Noam Chomsky -- afford a good contrast but are less than perfect illustrations of his point. Kirk resigned from the academy, admittedly, because of its tendency to sprawling growth and stolid habits. Chomsky's efforts as a public intellectual have been written and published far outside the orthodox channels of communication. But neither has ever felt the need for a supporting Bohemia, and neither has been positively annexed or stifled by the university context, as it perhaps that conservative purity of the

Kirk variety or radical *veritas* of the Chomsky sort are things the American culture feels it can do without? If so, a dutiful age of specialization is indeed upon us.

Jacoby's book (published in the United States by Basic Books, 290 pp. \$18.95 0 465 03812 3) has attracted warm comments from Kenneth Galbraith, Irving Howe, Gore Vidal, Christopher Lasch, Malcolm Cowley and other survivors of more daring and spacious intellectual decades. It has got a churlish reception from some reviewers, one of whom argued that the very existence of people like himself and his magazine (*The Voice Literary Supplement*) was proof of continuing vibrance in intellectual circles. It will, if Jacoby is wrong, lead to an intense debate. There has been no dearth of books about the past of the American -- most especially the New York -- intellectuals. It would be salutary to have some wrangling about their present, or the lack of it.

* * *

As little as a year ago, South Africa was an issue of intense and continuous debate in the United States. The wrinkles of the "cultural boycott" preoccupied the universities, the state of emergency faced the press with regular difficulties and the pleas of South African writers and intellectuals exercised a host of organizations from PEN downward. Today a sort of calm has descended on the subject. To put it mildly, this calm does not reflect the real situation in the country. Certain American newspapers, including one which recently won a Pulitzer Prize for its reportage from South Africa, have decided not to publish articles analysing the state of emergency in case publication should jeopardize their correspondents. This is too close to the intention of the censors for comfort.

A special double issue of *Triquarterly*, published by Northwestern University in Chicago, is therefore very timely. Entitled *From South Africa*, it comprises almost 500 pages of new writing, poetry and illustrations. The guest editors, David Bunn and Jane Taylor, are Cape Towners and lecturers in English. Of the contributions they've solicited, which range from two excerpts from Nadine Gordimer's latest novel to some verses by black miners, almost all are political, though some of the better items, such as a story called "Sweetness" by Sheila Roberts, use "the situation" less overtly, as background noise.

This double issue of *Triquarterly* may be had for \$13.50 from Northwestern University, 1735 Benson Avenue, Evanston, Illinois, 60201. Next month, the University and the magazine are to sponsor public forums on South African culture in co-operation with the Illinois Center for the Book.

Elizabeth Barry

scratching his head and muttering, "If only we had taken old Snegurev's book more seriously?"

On internal evidence, one of the attractions of the Soviet régime for the erstwhile Tsarist soldier and Bolshevik singer must have been the thought that the Soviet Union would pursue Tsarist policy in central Asia and fulfil Russia's manifest destiny much more effectively than the Tsars themselves had done. The Crimean War had been a blessing in disguise, notwithstanding the destruction of the Russian Mediterranean Fleet. The drive towards Constantinople and the Med had been a waste of time. The real weakness of the English, those world-aristocrats as Snegurev describes them, and of world capitalism, was India; and India could only be approached through Afghanistan. The British were weak in central Asia; whatever their bluster, this Soviet quickly defied an earlier Tsarist commitment to keep out as much as a squeak from the British, with-out Snegurev's evident delight. Now one could get on with the job. But until we actually use it as a road-way, at all costs keep out of that accursed place.

Snegurev also gives some amusing vignettes of earlier Russian efforts in this direction. On

Rabbit deluxe

The recent outcry over the new editions of Beatrix Potter's children's stories *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* and *The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin* has concentrated on appearances. The original delicately detailed watercolour illustrations have been replaced by colour photographs showing specially made models of rather inexpressive rabbits and squirrels, stiffly posed in attitudes similar to those Potter drew and with tiny aprons, shoes, jackets, etc. The books look, and presumably are intended in look, as if they are spin-offs from a television series.

But the text is also a travesty of Potter's original: "Please don't go to Mr McGregor's garden. 'Why not?' asked Peter. 'Because he doesn't like rabbits', answered Mrs Rabbit. 'He will try to catch you.'" The original Mr McGregor, it will be remembered, did like rabbits: "Don't go into Mr McGregor's garden," said Potter's Mrs Rabbit, "your Father had an accident there; he was put into a pie by Mrs McGregor." Flopsy, Mopsy and Cottontail have more of a look in the new version: "They had Peter's share, too, and they enjoyed every single bit of it."

The children's book world is one of versions, adaptations, retellings. Frederick Warne, the original publishers of *Peter Rabbit* and the copyright holders until 1993, have granted a licence for these editions, just as they have previously granted licences to produce *Peter Rabbit* china and *Peter Rabbit* board books. The new publishers are Ladybird, a well-run, widely distributed, genuinely popular publisher of inexpensive books for children. Their strength is that their books are available in newsagents and department stores to tempt the vast majority of the population who never go into a bookshop. Ladybird's *Peter Rabbit*, which is aimed at younger readers and not intended to replace Warne's, is bound to be a success. (A recent straw poll on television showed that among a group of primary school children, the preference was, overwhelmingly, for the Ladybird books. One of the things marketing experts and children have in common is lack of taste.)

They sell at 85p (Warne's editions are £2.75) and, as a spokesman plausibly hoped, they will encourage new readers to seek out the "real thing" (with its aura of death and its ungratifying mother). What is ironic is that Warne earlier this year invested a good deal in reorganizing their colour plates from the original art-work; that they are catering for a mass market anyway with print-runs of 300,000 and non-book outlets such as National Trust houses; and that Beatrix Potter is to be the subject of an exhibition at the Tate in November, thereby becoming yet further enshrined in our, non-vulgar, English Heritage.

Elizabeth Barry

January 12, 1801, the Ataman of the Don army, General Orlov, received a letter written by Tsar Paul I in his own hand, ordering him to march to Orenburg and from there to proceed via Bukhara and Khiva to the Indus. He was instructed to destroy the English factories and establishments in India, and bring India into the same kind of dependence on Russia that it had on England, and to turn its trade towards Russia. This he was to achieve with 22,500 Cossacks and twenty-four guns. Snegurev notes that the knowledge of Central Asia available to Paul was less than elementary. The whole idea, he says, was a piece of Quixotry. The Cossacks did not even get Orenburg before they received the news of Paul's death, and the order from his successor to return to their old quarters. Napoleon failed in his efforts to persuade Alexander I to launch a joint Franco-Russian overland expedition (this time 70,000 men including 10,000 Cossacks).

Snegurev was clearly a fine scholar with a well-developed geopolitical sense. Successive years do not nowadays reverse each other's orders quite so quickly, and send the troops back to barracks. But one likes to think that Snegurev's file is making the rounds in the Kremlin.

Letters

The Closing of the American Mind

Sir, -- David Rieff's intemperate attack on "the colonel and the professor" (September 4-11) descends to a low level of debate. It is one thing to question Allan Bloom's views, as have some reviews in conservative American journals; it is another to accuse Professor Bloom -- and other neo-conservatives -- of having written books "decent people would be ashamed of having written". Since when has decency become a term of critical discourse? Moreover, it is not clear why Rieff thinks such writers are not decent. He implies that their lack of decency comes in part from accepting grants from conservative foundations, but it is absurd to argue that Bloom, who is a tenured professor at a major university, is beholden to conservative foundations for his living. And surely Rieff knows that there are many well-endowed left-wing foundations in the United States. But I suspect that the only thing that makes one decent in Rieff's eyes is hatred of the Contras.

The "decent" Rieff is so angry with neo-conservatives that his essay at times makes little sense. He says, for example, that "this level-headed, realistic humanity is the essential quality that is absent from *The Closing of the American Mind* as it is from Colonel North's plans for Nicaragua's future". It is not clear how a diatribe against American education, which is what Bloom's book is, can be compared with a plan for giving military aid to the Contras -- whatever we think of the Contras, whose professed aim it is to restore democracy to Nicaragua. Rieff has little to say about his own plan for Nicaragua, though no doubt he thinks it is realistic and level-headed. All he says is that the war is stupid, and that he strongly objects to the United States fighting the war by proxy. Does he have the same objection to US support for the Afghan freedom-fighters?

In sum, Rieff's article is very short on analysis, very long on invective. He says that neo-conservatives write in the denunciatory mood, but nothing that I have read by any neo-conservative is so vulgarly "denunciatory" as Rieff's piece, which accuses neo-conservatives of being opportunistic, shameless, arrogant, stupid, vengeful and anti-American. That the TLS should choose to publish such an essay is puzzling and disturbing.

STEPHEN MILLER,
1465 Greenmont Court, Reston, Virginia 22090.

Yuri Gankovsky

Sir, -- In the TLS of September 18-24 M. Hauner reviews *Soviet-American Relations with Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan*, the papers presented at a seminar held in December 1984. He notes that Professor Yuri Gankovsky ("Jankovsky" is presumably a misprint), "for some reason never explained, was unable to appear at the seminar", and goes on to say that Soviet scholars "ought to make appearances at international conferences and utter their viewpoints with greater insistence".

Professor Gankovsky attended the seminar on "Central Asia: Tradition and change" held at London University's School of Oriental and African Studies in April of the present year. As two of your contributors, Professors Yapp and Gellner, can confirm, he "uttered his viewpoint" with considerable "insistence", and made some memorable interventions in the debate.

BRIAN PEARCE,
2 Victoria Road, New Barnet, Hertfordshire.

The Day of Judgement

Sir, -- P. N. Furbank's perceptive review of Salvatore Satta's *The Day of Judgement* (August 28) raises the interesting question of whether we should regard this impressive work as a novel or as a memoir. I must, however, admit that I am rather puzzled by Mr Furbank's distinction between the narrator, whom he regards as a fictional construction, and the "deadly earnest writer" whose comments he quotes. Since they are one and the same person, the work is narrated in the first person singular by someone who never unambiguously identifies himself but is, the reader gathers, the youngest son of Don Sebastiano and

Donna Vincenza. He it is who judges Nuoro, for the unquiet dead demand judgment in order to establish their reality and identity. Writing, in the final chapters at least, on the point of death, he offers himself for judgment to his readers to expiate the hurts he inflicted on his infirm and unhappy mother.

How much of this -- and the vivid account of Nuoro before the First World War -- is autobiography? If that were all there was to the book, it would be, as it were, Sardinian wine, rather than cider, with Rosie. But Satta has the ability to see apparently insignificant details as symptoms of larger processes of change which affect a whole society. Not, then, simply fictionalized autobiography. If one reads the novel in the light of Satta's *De Profundis* -- both were begun at about the same time -- then one reading which suggests itself is that of the novel as a study of the values of what Satta calls "traditional man", the cowardly opportunist bent on privilege and compromise, who permitted the rise of Fascism. It also includes a study of the development of the individual conscience to which -- as opposed to the values of mass society -- Satta appeals in the *De Profundis*.

But as yet English readers have no translation of this impressive and moving work, or of Satta's other novel, *La Veranda*, by which to judge for themselves the validity of my contention.

BRIAN MOLONEY,
Department of Italian, The University, Hull.

Parallel Distributed Processing

Sir, -- Geoffrey Sampson's review of David E. Rumelhart and James L. McClelland's *Parallel Distributed Processing* (June 12) focuses on a model of how children learn the past tense in English. The model contains no rules, only an associative network of simple neuronal-like units, yet it appears to acquire past-tense forms successfully and to mimic the kinds of errors that children make. Sampson says: "If they are right, it is difficult to exaggerate the magnitude of the revolution this implies for established ideas. . . . To continue teaching [linguistics] in the orthodox style would be like keeping alchemy alive."

Actually, it is quite easy to exaggerate this supposed revolution; Sampson has done so on a grand scale. The network theory that lies at its heart is plainly false -- children do not work the way the model does; and the model does not come close to duplicating everyday adult performance with English. According to the network theory, children start to make errors like "broken" because their environment changes -- parents use mostly irregular verbs in their speech to infants, then switch to a mixture in which verbs taking the regular "-ed" suffix predominate. The facts are otherwise. The ratio of irregular to regular verbs in parents' speech and in children's own vocabularies does not change during the crucial development stages. The key event is not in the environment, as the model assumes, but in the head of the child. McClelland and Rumelhart are also wrong about why children make errors such as "broken". They claim it is because children have no notion of discrete "words", but blend together bits and pieces of sound associated with the stem "break", in this case "broken" and "broke". In fact, the errors occur because children misconstrue "broke" as itself being an English stem. You can hear this when children say things like "broking" and "lo broke". The concepts "rule" and "word" of "orthodox style" linguistics are hardly obsolete; they are alive in the psychology of every pre-school child.

The model does even worse at trying to simulate the adult speaker. After 80,000 "lessons" provided by a "teacher", the model still made strong errors on a third of the regular verbs it was tested on. Moreover, its very design makes it inconsistent with some elementary properties of human languages. For example, the fact that two verbs can sound the same but have different past-tense forms (eg. ring-rang, wring-wrang) is utterly beyond its grasp. The model can easily learn bizarre rules found in no language -- such as pronouncing the phonemes of the stem in reverse order.

but cannot learn some natural rules found in thousands of human languages. These are just two of the kinds of facts that linguistic theory addresses and explains; the network model can afford to look quite revolutionary because it simply ignores them.

Sampson sees "awesome implications for linguistics as an academic discipline" because he believes that few linguists have the sophistication in mathematics and computer science needed to understand these new theories. He has it backwards. The network's flaws are apparent to any linguist who chooses to inspect it with a critical eye. Had the champions of network models chosen to deal more seriously with the facts of the language, we doubt we would be hearing the kind of grandiose claims repeated in Sampson's obsequious review.

STEVEN PINKER,
Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

ALAN PRINCE,
Program in Linguistics and Cognitive Science, Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts.

Charles Darwin

Sir, -- Ralph Colp's comments (Letters, July 31) on my letter of July 3 about Charles Darwin's illness show that he is aware of allergy only in its antibody-mediated form. I was using the term as defined by von Pirquet in 1906, when he specified that the word "allergen" might include substances which led to no production of antibodies. In this case the mechanism is generalized suppression of immune system function, not specific reactions to antigens.

Classic antibody-mediated allergy reactions are consistent and unaffected by stress. The other kind involves the total stress load on the immune system, clearly a varying factor and including psychological stress. I am not, as Dr Colp infers, shutting my eyes to the fluctuations in Darwin's health due to emotional stress. They are obvious and strong evidence in favour of a theory which depends on generalized immune system dysfunction. Darwin's tolerance of stress was so poor because of his degree of immune system damage, but this does not make his illness "psychological". The last straw breaks the camel's back only because of the presence of all the other straws.

Dr Colp will find the evidence he asks for in support of my allergy theory in the writings of clinical ecologists such as Dr Theron Randolph and Dr Richard Mackarness.

FABIENNE SMITH,
55 Manor Place, Edinburgh.

Melancholy

Sir, -- I did not write (Letters, September 18-24) that we use music as "just a transitional object" in Winnicott's sense, which would be a shocking opinion. I wrote "just such a transitional object", which allows for all the other layers of music's illimitable value.

ROBERT DONINGTON,
Fife, Lewes, East Sussex.

New Editions

Sir, -- Many thanks to Jane O'Grady for her thoughtful review of two of my poetry collections (September 18). It should be pointed out, however, that both are new editions of earlier books. *Time and Motion* was first published by Prism/Poetry Society of Australia in 1975, and *The Tenth Muse* by Peterloo in 1983.

SYLVIA KANTARIS,
14 Osborne Park, Helston, Cornwall.

After Joyce

Sir, -- I've just finished reading (September 4-11) a poem called "The Masochist's Week". It goes: "Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday/Friday/Saturday/Sunday."

I had an idea I had read it before, or something like it, and found in *Finnegans Wake* (page 301, 1939 edition) the following: "All moonday, learday, waldoy, thumpdoy, frightday, shatterday till the fear of the Law."

ANTONIO CALLADO,
Rua Apetana 143/02, Leblon 22430, Rio de Janeiro.

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COMMENTARY

The etiquette of tyranny

Grevel Lindop

FRIEDRICH SCHILLER
Don Carlos
Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester

British playgoers, if they think of Schiller's *Don Carlos* as anything more than a shadowy presence behind Verdi's flamboyant opera, probably suspect it of being worthy but unperformable, a compound of stodgy philo-sophizing and implausible *Sham and Drang*. If so, as many of them as possible should make their way to Manchester, where Nicholas Hytner's production will offer them a revelation. Disciplined, crackling with energy and fully alive to the intricate dance of emotional and political tensions in this Chinese-box of a play, it establishes *Don Carlos* as a masterpiece of genuinely Shakespearean richness and subtlety: if not in language (James Maxwell's translation, for all its terse and fluid eloquence, cannot tell us that) then at any rate in complexity of characterization, suggestive ingenuity of plotting and the humane, many-sided intelligence which subjects every political and emotional stance to compassionate criticism.

Richard Hudson designs the production in stark black and white, the Cardinal's robes of the Grand Inquisitor providing a single, startling blaze of colour. Court ladies and grandees stalk stiffly across the black-tiled, cruciform stage, or shuffle and hob ludicrously backwards out of the royal presence in a grotesque ballet of constricting court etiquette.

The rituals of home

Julian Graffy

JOHN BERGER and NELLA BIELSKI
A Question of Geography
The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon

In 1937, Yevgeniya Ginzburg, teacher, journalist and wife of Pavel Aksyonov, a party official in Kazan, was arrested and imprisoned. Soon afterwards Aksyonov himself disappeared in the Purges. In 1939 Ginzburg was deported to Kulyba. Released into administrative exile in the town of Magadan in 1947, she met the man who would become her second husband, the prisoner doctor, Anton Val'ter. On October 9, 1948, after superhuman efforts, she was re-united in Magadan with her son, Vasily Aksyonov, later to be the most popular prose writer of the generation of the 'Thaw'. In 1949 she was briefly re-arrested. Ginzburg has told her story in her memoirs, *Into the Whirlwind* and *Within the Whirlwind*, which, along with the writings of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Georgy Vladimov and Sergey Dolzhatov, are among the most eloquent witnesses to life within and around the Soviet prison-camp zone. The reunion of mother and son is described with great poignancy in *Within the Whirlwind*, and also in Aksyonov's novel, *The Burn*, published in the United States where the author continues to live in exile. It is a measure, perhaps, of the relative extent of the present liberalization that none of the writers mentioned above is either published or announced for publication in the Soviet Union.

A *Question of Geography*, first performed in Marseille in 1983, is dedicated to Yevgeniya Ginzburg. It tells the story of Daria Petrovna (Dacha), the French translator who has been carelessly preserved in the printed text and may cause English readers some confusion about pronunciation), a former Kolyma prisoner now in forced exile in Magadan; of her love for the prisoner, Dr Ernst Miushevich Oizermann; of their fellow exiles, and of her reunion with her son, Sacha. This is not, however, Ginzburg's story: the play is set in 1952, and Dacha's first husband turns out to be still alive.

The horror ever lurking in these people's lives is powerfully evoked in John Caird's production as guards stride menacingly about the back of the stage. The play unfolds as an elaboration of the forces that can sustain the struggle against inhumanity, from the search for God to a visit to the cinema. Above all,

Ian McDiarmid gives an outstanding and subtle performance as Philip II. He is a believable despot, his paranoid domestic tyranny over his wife and son a convincing metaphor for the Spanish oppression of the Protestant Netherlands. Yet he wins our respect, even our grudging admiration, by his lonely stoicism, by his savagely humorous penetration of his self-seeking courtiers' fake humility, and by his readiness to recognize real honesty and intelligence when he meets them.

He is effectively complemented in quite different ways by Reece Dinsdale's Marquis of Posa and Michael Grandage's Don Carlos. Posa is Schiller's spokesman, and his confrontations with Philip offer us the fantastic gratifications of watching Romantic liberalism, freedom of thought and "the rights of human nature" confronting Counter-Reformation absolutism; the revolutionary eighteenth century arguing with the sixteenth. Yet the scenes are not allowed to stiffen into allegory or abstraction: Dinsdale gives Posa passion and idealism, but also a mischievous delight in intrigue and provocation which charms but also disturbingly substantiates Philip's accusations of egocentric irresponsibility. The King, on the other hand, grows almost paternal; it seems altogether natural that he should choose Posa, the one outspoken man in his kingdom, for a friend; equally natural that Posa, from the noblest motives, should lie to him, betray his trust and at last, in an attempt at glorious self-sacrifice, precipitate the death of Carlos himself.

Michael Grandage plays Carlos as victim rather than hero. His obsessive hatred of his

father, justified though it is, distracts him at every turn. Grandage gives him a physical gaucherie that reflects his mental imbalance, and a slight awkwardness of timing in his speech that puts him subtly out of phase with the other characters, a precise correlative of his propensity for acting always too soon or too late. It is one of the most unpleasant yet intelligent features of the play that Philip is right in viewing his son as a weakling. Superficially a charismatic and rebellious figure, in reality Carlos performs almost every action at the behest of someone else. Grandage allows this fatal passivity to emerge without depriving the prince of his volatile energy or his attractive innocence. Melinda McGraw, effectively combining impulsiveness with cynicism as the Princess of Eboli, nicely dramatizes, in her attempted seduction of the Prince, the dangers that lurk in his unformed character.

In a play full of surprises, James Maxwell's Grand Inquisitor, introduced late in the last act, delivers the greatest shock of all. Blind, tottering on two white sticks, physically ravaged by extreme old age, he yet towers in his scarlet robes, seemingly held upright by a fanaticism so extreme and articulate that he is able instantly to turn the tables on Philip and force the audience into a complete reassessment of the play's action so far. Lecturing the King with putatively weary putnamage on the Church's plans for Posa and for Spain, he reduces him to a sheepish simpleton, who will hand over his son to the Inquisition less from vindictiveness than as a final gesture of absolute moral and political defeat.

of escape. As Gricha, an old exile, puts it, Sacha is so far only a "tourist" in Magadan. Sacha too, however, learns from harsh experience, and his decision to stay in Magadan is evidence of his maturation.

A *Question of Geography* is not without its weaknesses. Though Sacha's father is announced as still alive (and his letter read out by the clumsy device of a disembodied voice on a darkened stage), nothing is made of the consequences of this fact for the life of Dacha and Ernst. Life is made to look too attractive in Sue Blane's set. The part of Gricha is written, and played by Jimmy Gardner, with inappropriate levity. One unbelievable scene in which he and Sacha stage a mock-trial, with Gricha wearing a joke Stalin moustache, shows that the authors, for all their concern, have been unable to express the true horror of Siberian exile. The production is taken at far too slow a pace - three hours for a text of this length is too long.

As the play progresses, however, and June turns to August, it achieves gravely and pity. The cast is excellent. In the last scene, as winter returns, Dacha's warning words ring out: "It isn't over. It's not finished. It's not the end."

AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 348
Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than October 16. The solution and results will appear on October 23.

1 Ere magic poets felt the goal,
Ere Darwin "whelped the Church in doubt,"
Ere Apollonia had found out
The round world must be right;
When Chastelaine, latest of the blue,
Read all Augustine's follies through;
When France was lame, and no one knew
We and the Car would fight.

2 Let it be admitted at once, mountain as the admission is, that every instinct in his intelligence went out at first to greet the new light. It had hardly dawned, when a revolution of the opening chapter of "Genesis" checked it at the outset. He consulted with Carpenter, a great investigator, but one who was fully as incapable as himself of remodelling his ideas with regard to the old, accepted hypothesis. They both determined, on various grounds, to have nothing to do with the terrible theory, but to hold steadily to the law of the fixity of species.

3 He had taken a great deal of pains with his sermon, which was on the subject of geology - then coming to the fire as a theological digression. He showed that as geology was worth anything at all - and he was

too liberal entirely to pooh-poo it - it confirmed the absolutely historical character of the Mosaic account of the Creation as given in Genesis. Any phenomena which at first sight appeared to make against this view were only partial phenomena and broke down upon investigation.

Competition No 344

Winner: Patrick Crotty

Answers:
1 I caught a tremendous fish
and held him beside the boat
half out of the water, with my hook
in a corner of his mouth.
Elizabeth Bishop, "The Fish"

2 The tiny fish enjoy themselves
in the sea.
Quick little spinners of life,
their little lives are fun to them
in the sea.
D. H. Lawrence, "Little Fish"

3 His back was mottled and clear, water-over-gravel colour, his side flashing in the sun. The rod under his right arm, Nick stooped, dipping his right hand into the current. He held the trout, never still, with his left hand, and dropped him back into the stream.
Ernest Hemingway, "The Two-Hearted River"

Uncertain ends

Lois Potter

CYRIL TOURNEUR
The Revenger's Tragedy
Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

The Revenger's Tragedy is, to use one of its favourite words, "uncertain", not only in its authorship but in its very nature. The plot is grim enough: a court which apparently devotes all its time to raping and poisoning women finally topples, at a push from the single-minded revenger, Vindice, like a series of dominoes. The ironic reversals which lead to this ending suggest farce, but they are accompanied by a steady stream of misogynistic and misogynist comments. Its uncertainty is precisely what makes it, in spite of its subject-matter, an exhilarating emotional sauna.

Di Trevis's production for the Royal Shakespeare Company, plying up both the comic and the horrific, gets the balance about right. Lussurioso, released from prison, is surprised when his brothers shrink back from him - they had just been celebrating his execution - and, misunderstanding their reaction, sniffs his armpits. When Vindice and Hippolito force a cup into the already stiff hand of the murdered Duke, we hear the sound of breaking bones. But the chilly moral is not ignored: a God is watching all this, in the form of a large three-bladed fan revolving above the stage, and the thunder comes when Vindice calls for it.

The set and costumes (by Michael Levine) pick up the play's references to masques, lorches, "artificial noon", and the strange metallic imagery which turns the human body into a robot. Most of the characters are in fact programmed to go straight for sex even in the form of another robot. The nobility talk like East End minders, and the ducal family, half-heartedly going through a non-stop masque, are like out-of-work actors dressed in old Christmas decorations.

The social contrasts are Dickensian: Vindice's family aren't merely living in genteel poverty; they huddle in a garret, feeding on scraps which Hippolito smuggles out of the court. Realistically, this seems nonsensical: why would Lussurioso bother to send a courier to woo this beggarly Castiza? But the court has built its mansion in the place of excrement. A "scavenger" occasionally slithers out from under a rock to plunder the bodies. He is last seen sizing up the elderly new duke.

In a cast which is mostly asked to perform stylish variations on evil, Nicholas Farrell's impressive Lussurioso makes the most of the character's intellectual grasp of the moral values which he ignores in practice, and David Howey, as the Duke, is a nice combination of feebleness and unexpected sharpness. In the midst of this corruption, Stella Goner's Castiza is passionately rather than frigidly virtuous and her confrontation with Vindice and her mother (Linda Spurrier, surprisingly sympathetic) is a high point of the production. As Vindice, whose part has everything - disguises, funny accents, asides, instant changes of mood, and a love-scene with a skull - Anthony Sher gives the best and most controlled performance I have yet seen from him. His disguises are a *tour de force* (as Plato, with blood-red hair, beard, and gloves, he looks a foot taller than the "poor scholar" Vindice), but his real achievement is that he makes his lines, with their mixture of sensuality and sermonizing, both compelling and intelligible. The performance unsettles right up to the final speech: here, as with the nightmare soliloquy in *Richard III*, one expects to see the "true" self - but there is no such person, and thus no sense of closure.

For once, the textual alterations are improvements. Vindice, as Plato, now says the line about murderers revealing themselves to him that he harks back, ironically, at the end. Antiope's description of his wife's rape is transposed to the trial scene, where she is seen, sobbing, beside him. The court's cynical attitude to the crime thus becomes the cause of her suicide. As in the 1966 RSC production, the Duehess and Spurio get extra lines - mostly witty couplets. Why aren't we told who wrote them? There are enough authorship problems in this play as it is.

Getting rid of the elephants

Graham Bradshaw

GIUSEPPE VERDI
Aida
Theatre Royal, Glasgow

The very first performance of *Aida* was not a success, and the most influential Italian music critic of the time, Filippo Filippi, attributed the failure to the work's "strange duality" and "curiously abrupt" transitions: Verdi had accepted the "operatic ideas" and "tendencies" of the "modern school", while retaining a "huge affection for his own past", so that his latest opera lurched from "one style to another".

The first production in Scottish Opera's new season is a spectacular but rather belligerently analytical Scottish-Belgian co-production which provokes thought about Verdi's work while making emotional engagement more difficult. That sounds Brechtian, and indeed the director, Gilbert Deflo, worked with the Berlin Ensemble and then with Giorgio Strehler, before becoming Director of the Belgian National Opera at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels. Like Filippi, Deflo finds *Aida* curiously dualistic: "There are two *Aidas*. The one, an elegant chamber piece between three people, Radames, Amneris and Aida herself; the other, the huge, epic spectacle: gigantomania."

Deflo's solution is to stage the problem, performing *Aida* as a "chamber piece" set in the 1870s. Spectacle there is, but it now corresponds with that of the 1869 opening of the Suez Canal, when the Canal was formally blessed in the presence of assorted Imperial and Royal visitors. For Deflo, "any Egyptian presence in the piece is written from an 1870s perspective": the opera "tells us nothing about ancient Egypt" but a great deal about late nineteenth-century "attitudes", about "imperialism, nationalism and racism". Accordingly, his production tells us a great deal about late twentieth-century attitudes to the nineteenth century.

Self-referential soliloquies

David Nokes

BEN JONSON
The Magnific Lady
Adapted by Peter Barnes
Radio 3

As if echoing the RSC's recent attempts to popularize some of Ben Jonson's lesser-known plays, Radio 3 chose to celebrate the 350th anniversary of Jonson's death not with one of the familiar favourites, but with a production of *The Magnific Lady* (1632). Adapted by Peter Barnes and directed by Ian Couterell, it provided a rare and welcome opportunity to hear one of his final plays. What emerged was a meditative, self-conscious, self-referential drama in which the ageing playwright appears to isolate and scrutinize the elements of his art like a scientist constructing an experiment. Each act of this five-act comedy is enclosed by a critical debate between Damplay and Probes, two customers at the Jonsonian drama-shop, and the resident shop-boy. With a mixture of defensiveness and self-advertisement the boy runs through the repertoire of the house, from *Every Man in His Humour* to *The New Day*, while expounding the Jonsonian doctrine of the humours. Nor are such self-regarding moments confined to these critical interludes. The characters in the play itself are also conscious of Jonson's art, breaking off from their pursuit of dowries, maidenheads or bigoted treasure to comment on the virtues of his epigrams or to debate the qualities of his latest play. The effect is rather as if Hamlet, in his advice to the players, had invited them to study *Titus Andronicus*.

This self-consciousness extends into the plot which draws attention to its own contrivances in a manner more reminiscent of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern than Volpone*. When wrote them? There are enough authorship problems in this play as it is.

Transposing any opera or play to another period is difficult because it calls for a kind of sustained punning. Here Deflo's *Aida*, like Patrice Chéreau's *Ring*, showed how critically interesting ideas and concepts easily run foul of practical musical-dramatic exigencies. As Shaw, Chéreau and Thomas Mann all saw, there are good reasons for thinking of Wotan as a late nineteenth-century industrialist; but if he is actually to appear in a frock-coat his spear becomes a liability. *Aida*, like *Don Carlos*, does indeed reveal Verdi's hatred of priests and popes, so that Deflo is in one sense right to insist that Verdi "clearly saw Rasmis as a Pope" or as "a Khominci, if you like"; but that connection - "seeing as" - is actually less clear when Rasmis no longer appears as an ancient Egyptian priest, since it is harder to know just what he is, or does.

Getting rid of the elephants and allowing beards doesn't matter. Eliminating the sacred priestess does, because the music we hear no longer connects with anything we see on stage. In more general terms, what we see in this production - the paraphernalia of pith helmets, lantern shows and imperial hustles - makes its own fascinating sense, but only as a comment, imposed from without, on what we are no longer allowed to see. Analysis displaces the object of analysis; the commentary is staged, rather than the text.

Which makes it all the more intriguing that the conductor, John Mauceri, is so concerned to allow us to hear what Verdi specified in matters of tempo. Here there are challenging jolts of a quite different sort, since Mauceri's study of Verdi's conducting score for the Paris premiere convinced him that later conductors like Toscanini distorted Verdi's "temporal structures" and disregarded quite specific melodic markings. Not that the latter necessarily establish the former: much depends on whether we think listeners would pick up long-range connections - say between the marking for the Act One prelude and the identical marking for the conclusion of the *Aida*-*Amneris* duet. To judge by this production this promises to be an exciting but controversial season.

protest at this deliberate piece of dramatic legerdemain. But in the next act Jonson promptly changes plot again to make Placentia herself a changeling. While in the final act he digs up yet another plot-line to send his characters off in search of buried gold. By such overt manipulation Jonson seems to expose the arbitrariness of narrative. His interest in this play, subtitled *Humours Reconciled*, is less in the melody of events than in the harmony of humours.

Peter Barnes's adaptation sticks faithfully to the main lines of the play, merely pruning away some of his more didactic exchanges and esoteric verbal games. Sir Moth Interest's inflationary estimate of the eight reasons for desiring infinite wealth is thrifty cut back to six brief points; a prolonged debate on varieties of valour is prudently abridged. The chief casualty of the cuts is Jonson's bawdy. Inevitably many of his salacious puns and quibbles would be lost on modern listeners, and few would seriously lament the dignifying abbreviation of "survivorship" to "rovership". But where modern slang retains the sense of Jonson's *double entendres* the alterations are more questionable. Jonson's Parson Palate "pricks all the guests" but in this version he merely "selects all the guests". A number of such bowdlerizations has the unfortunate effect of losing the tang of Jonson's colloquial humour.

John Moffat is suitably fastidious as Sir Disaphones Silkworth, and Peter Eyre impressively pedantic as the lawyer Practice. Ian Couterell's well-paced direction gives as much coherence as possible to this episodic play, though his habit of interrupting the longer speeches with grunts of approval or surprise seems to betray a certain nervousness about the attentiveness of his listeners.

The Royal Shakespeare Company's production of Ben Jonson's *The New Inn*, directed by John Caird, will open at the Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, on November 4.



"Memorations VIII", 1978, by Jean Dubuffet, from an exhibition Works on Paper 1974-85, at Waddington Galleries until October 24.

Evading escape-art

Wilfrid Mellers

STEPHEN SONDHEIM and JOHN WEIDMAN
Pacific Overtures
Coliseum

Without resorting to the political terms of John Lahr's remark that "musicals are America's night-wing political theatre because they reinforce the dreams that support the status quo", we cannot help being depressed that so many people, over so many consecutive performances (compared with any opera), spend so much money out so dispiriting an entertainment. In the heyday of lunatism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the aristocracy squandered colossal sums on concealing shows intended to kid themselves into believing they had created a terrestrial paradise. Such masques masked truth, ironically, so do those created, at comparable expense, by today's industrial plutocracy for the common man, since they exploit modern technology to encourage escape from the very world technology has brought to birth.

The origins of the American musical were in Europe, in Viennese, French and English operetta. It became the escape-art of industrial technocracy when it absorbed elements of American vaudeville and minstrel shows, while defusing the blacker strains within them. A few minor composers of musicals - Jerome Kern, trained in Europe, Irving Berlin, not trained at all - added to the sum of human delight. Even they, however, did not counteract the sentimental evasiveness of the genre; and although once in a while a musical has erupted that attempts to confront some aspect of reality, the issues are usually blurred and often falsified.

The natural successor to Gershwin and Bernstein, Stephen Sondheim first made his mark in *West Side Story* (1957) for which he, with a verbal facility no less dazzling but more astute than Ira Gershwin's, was Bernstein's "lyricist". In addition to theatrical earnings, Sondheim has an instinctive musical ear, and both talents were spotted by his first mentor from the world of musical theatre, Oscar Hammerstein II. Since 1970 he has, in collaboration with the director Hal Prince, produced a series of shows variously entertaining, yet always tinged with a mordant acerbity responsive to human folly or distress. The climax to the cycle, *Sweeney Todd* (1979), rivals *Porgy and Bess* in dealing with contemporary reality in a totally unevanescent manner.

Pacific Overtures, running for fewer than 200 performances on Broadway, was, like *Sweeney Todd* a pecuniary failure, though it is now presented in an open-house as a potential money-spinner. It predates *Sweeney* by three years, and it cannot challenge the later piece. As always with Sondheim, however, it is about something that matters: the impingement on the old religious-feudal Japan of Western European and especially American technology. In tracing the saga, from the mid-nineteenth-century expedition of Commodore

Perry to the present day, Sondheim is open-eyed and open-eared about the complexity of the issues. At a basic historical level he faces reality by getting his facts right; not then lights on the bright notion of equating the human theme with its technical realization. For he submits the ancient conventions of Japanese theatre to streamlined American technology on the musical and dramatic planes alike, allowing the ironies to operate in both directions. This works because Kabuki, like an American musical and unlike a Japanese Noh play, is a still living popular art mixing speech, song, dance, mime, clowning and slapstick. Sondheim's score opens with the antique wail of an authentic shakuhachi (magically played at the Coliseum by Yoshikazu Iwamoto), and with near-authentic Kabuki percussion and simulated koto: which sounds are, through the course of the evening, gradually engulfed in the electronic phonics of the modern world. In the process Sondheim hints that the "old" Japanese culture and the "new" American technology need one another for survival.

The process is intelligent rather than heart-felt. The mechanized gimmickry of a Broadway musical is employed by Ralph Kallai and Marie-Jean Lecocq to produce sets and costumes of considerable visual beauty. The musical imitations and parodies - whether of the whines of Japanese cantillation and the twanging of oriental instruments, or of military marches and pop music - are sometimes arresting and usually clever, though not as clever as the stage business: in which Eric Roberts and Harry Nicol are especially hilarious.

The piece's limitation lies in the fact that, despite its theatrical panache and skill, its musical substance remains tenuous. As a synthesis of East and West, *Pacific Overtures* skims the surface compared with *Madama Butterfly*, let alone Britten's inspired metamorphosis, in *Curtain River*, of an esoteric Japanese Noh play into an English medieval morality play updated. Still, Sondheim, is not making an operatic tragedy; and if *Pacific Overtures* doesn't get under the skin, as does *Sweeney Todd*, it works on its own level. The full-scale cast, each member plying several roles, as in real Kabuki, adapt their operatic training to produce the speech-inflected vocal nuances and meticulous metrical precision which the genre calls for. Richard Angas as the narrator gives a multi-voiced virtuoso performance; Simon Masterman-Smith is deliciously deft in his patter-song; Graham Fletcher's electrifying Lion Dance alone justifies the evening.

Such malleability between technical brilliance and the emotional overtone gives Sondheim's work its distinction: as is revealed in Keith Warner's production and James Holmes's conducting. Although *Pacific Overtures*, skirting the more sinister aspects of Americanization, has more in common with an ordinary musical than one had expected, one can hardly dismiss it as bland. In its cool intelligence, its theatrical flair, its very lack of the invidiously inane tune, it is neither corrupt nor corrupting. It waves a small flag on behalf of the human mind and sensibility.

Rules of play

David Hughes

WILLIAM P. MALM
Six Hidden Views of Japanese Music
222pp. University of California Press. £17.25.
0521051452

Exposure to Japanese music is on the rise in England. Noh and Kabuki troupes seem to turn up annually. Radio 3 has broadcast – and rebroadcast – a series of shakuhachi (bamboo flute) recitals; an all-British Japanese court music (gagaku) ensemble has recently made its public debut. The English National Opera's new production of *Pacific Overtures* (reviewed on page 1049) features a Japanese shakuhachi player in the pit (albeit playing the music of Southem).

Exposure leads to familiarity but also not necessarily to understanding. Reviewers of concerts in the recent "Music of the Royal Courts" series at the South Bank, confronted with performances from nearly a dozen countries, were often driven to respectful silence: how could they tell whether a performance by, say, a Japanese epic singer was radiant, pedestrian or awful by Japanese standards? Without the knowledge to risk such judgments, one's appreciation must be less than complete. Through nearly three decades of writing about Japanese music, William Malm has striven to provide the Western reader with such knowledge.

His new book is not an introductory survey of Japanese traditional music; Malm, Professor of Music at the University of Michigan, wrote that book in 1959 and it has yet to be superseded. The present book consists of six case studies of music from those genres most congenial to Malm: Nagauta (Kabuki dance music) and Noh theatre music. The book is aimed at a musically literate audience; determined readers with a musicological bent will be rewarded.

Over the years Malm has championed the

view that non-Western music systems must satisfy demands similar to those of the European harmonic tradition – balancing novelty and familiarity, tension and release – and that they do so in different but equally logical ways. There is in this endeavour the hint of a desire to legitimize Japanese music – and the ethnomusicologist's concerns in general – in the eyes of Western musicologists, but Malm's efforts are no less successful or valuable for that. In the present book it is perhaps the last of the six "hidden views" that most overtly demonstrates this point: Malm offers a section-by-section musical comparison of Britten's *Chester River* with the Noh play *Sunidagawa* from which its libretto was derived. (The reader will want to obtain the cassette tape of musical examples which costs £6.50; Western notation cannot convey the subtleties of Japanese music.) Each of the six Views, however, testifies to the well-tuned aesthetic system permeating Japanese musical culture as a whole.

The First View examines the aesthetics underlying the manufacture and appreciation of one type of drum, the *kotsumi*, which features prominently in both Kabuki and Noh music. Based primarily on written treatises, this chapter introduces the extreme subtleties involved in evaluating the tone colour of even a seemingly simple drum. It says much about the social status of this drum, that the two authorities most frequently cited, joint authors of a 1917 study, are respectively an executive of the Asahi Beer Company and an architect who, like his samurai father, had studied Noh.

The Second View takes us from the drum's construction into the experience of a drum lesson. Much of the instruction seems from a Western perspective to have little to do with sound production; the ultimate goal, Malm feels, "may be spiritual rather than musical". (Perhaps also ethical: Japanese often say, "There are no bad people among those who study [traditional] music.") Thus there is an emphasis on doing things in the correct way – picking up a drum, for example – even when

nobody is watching. Japan shares with the rest of Asia a preference for teaching by concrete example rather than by explanation, and for learning rhythmic and melodic patterns in context rather than as abstract, separable elements; not surprisingly, then, one theme of this book is the way in which the form of a given musical element will vary in context and over time according to "a host of theoretical, musical, choreographic, and sociological factors" – Malm's musical "theory of relativity". As in a modern Japanese business contract, when conditions change, prior understandings are invalidated.

A sixteen-page interlude provides an excellent brief introduction to "General principles of Japanese music", touching on matters such as the importance of silence, the value of notational vagueness, and the communal nature of Japanese composition.

The remaining four Views are studies of particular pieces. These are more than "views": they are detailed examinations of the devices of Japanese composition. The Third View compares a single story in its Noh and Kabuki (Nagauta) versions, yielding insights into the respective musical idioms of these two theatrical genres. Here as throughout, Malm peppers his narrative with Zen-like quotations. For example, to perform the highly rhythmic percussion passage known as *raifu*, "one has to

feel as though one were a large rubber band that stretches with great tension and then suddenly snaps".

The Fourth View compares one Nagauta piece with the urban festival music on which it is based. The Fifth View, dealing with interpretation, compares four performances of a single Nagauta. All of the Nagauta studies offer excellent descriptions of Japanese text-setting practice, a long-standing concern of Malm's.

The final View – text setting by Britten and *la japonaise* – reveals that each work is true to its cultural conventions. To avoid merely composing a pastiche of a Noh play, Britten intentionally limited his sonic exposure to Noh; thus this chapter is much more than a mere game of "spot-the-Noh-influence". Two different aesthetics are at work: "the Noh requires infrequent use of sonic . . . conventions that are common to the entire repertoire, and Western drama concentrates on frequent use and development of motives that are peculiar to the specific composition" (emphasis added).

This is a difficult book for readers with little knowledge of Japanese music. No other author, however, has so successfully explored the aesthetic detail of this music from both a native and a comparative perspective; and perhaps the musicologists of the West are now ready for such a book.

The search for wisdom

Arnold Whittall

DONALD MITCHELL (Editor)
Benjamin Britten: "Death in Venice"
224pp. Cambridge University Press.
£27.50 (paperback, £9.95).
0521263347

This Cambridge Opera Handbook – the fourteenth – is unusual. The opera under scrutiny – Britten's last – is recent, and the contributors include several of those most closely associated with its genesis and first staging. The result is very much the inside story, as well as the case for the defence at its most eloquent and comprehensive. The handbook format promotes a certain lack of perspective. Yet despite the absence of extended comparisons with other operas by Britten or anyone else, or of a detailed critique, it cannot be claimed that *Death in Venice* is here being praised with undue extravagance by those with vested interests. The emphasis is primarily on how the work was put together, and how it relates to Thomas Mann's novella. It is already to some degree a familiar story, but this book provides the fullest and most up-to-date version. There is a reasonable balance between new and reprinted material, the latter even embracing a brief article from 1965 about the man held to be the original of Mann's Tadzio. The chapter on Visconti's film may be thought superfluous, yet it underlines one of the book's virtues: its concern with Mann as well as Britten.

Death in Venice was composed at a time of particular stress and strain for Britten, but it grew to completion with remarkable speed. As the librettist Myfanwy Piper says, "it took a little over two and a half years from our first conversation to the first night at Snape" – the absence of an "only" indicating that such a pace was normal for Britten. The sense of a race against time is appropriate enough, given the opera's subject. But, as always with Britten, speed brought risks, and the possibility of a result more sketchy than Intense could not be ruled out. It is arguable that other composers – Berg, Henze – might have created more ripidly decadent Venice, and a more imposing Aschenbach. But the fascination of Britten's opera lies in the levels of translation it embodies. What might have been an expressionist melodrama becomes something altogether more redemptive. The work is poised between the stylizations of chamber opera and the more "realistic" attributes of the post-Verdian tradition to which Britten was heir, not indecisively but with a sure instinct for what use to make of conventions and expectations. To English critics Britten's Aschenbach can seem especially ambivalent: a master of German prose, yet also an ageing, anguished, puritan Narcissus for whom the Adriatic beach is

transformed into the ghostly simulacrum of a public-school playing-field. Bayan Northcott, whose 1973 *New Statesman* review is reprinted here with a postscript that by no means wholly renounces his initial reservations, found a "pre-school nostalgia" in the beach games, and other critics singled out this scene from Act One for their principal dispraise. As the opera has grown more familiar, however, this scene, and this aspect of characterization, have been accepted as vital contributors to the work's two principal qualities: not just its ambivalence, but also its diversity.

In their different ways the various technical commentaries in this handbook stress the opera's unifying elements – thematic, tonal, twelve-note; one writer, Eric Roseberry, declares that "this is indeed a symphonic opera, which is slaped into what resembles a vastly extended movement in the manner of Mahler". What the book lacks is a complementary study of the opera's diverse forms: the way the *secco* recitative and a rich variety of "numbers" coexist, uneasily at times, to propel the drama. As John Evans implies, the work is indeed as much about polarities as unities, and those polarities are deeply embedded in its forms and textures as well as its pitch-procedures and stylistic perspectives (from baroque recitative to those pervasive evocations of the gamelan).

Clash and conflict are after all endemic to the story itself, to its concern with the power of the beautiful to inspire – and destroy. Donald Mitchell provides an eloquent explication of the opera as an "integrated work of art that culminates in the disintegration of its protagonist without itself disintegrating". As T. J. Reed observes, Aschenbach's disintegration is itself the result of a tragic failure: Aschenbach "has pursued not beauty through Tadzio but only the beautiful Tadzio". He has in fact abandoned his search for the wisdom to which that beauty should lead.

Britten, unsparsingly honest in his creative vision, did not seek to translate away the ultimate denendence of Mann's Aschenbach. And the ineffable sadness of the counterpoint in the opera's postlude, between music associated with Aschenbach's thought and Tadzio's form, delicately affirms the compatibility of inspiration and disintegration, knowledge and instinct, in a remarkable, briefly sustained but haunting equilibrium. The "collaboration" of this composer and this writer remains a source of special fascination, and this volume will give opera-goers intrigued by their coming together much valuable food for thought.

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Surveying the reverse slope

Antony Beevor

WILLIAM BOYD
The New Confessions
462pp. Hamish Hamilton. £11.95.
0241238326

"My first act on entering this world was to kill my mother", writes the narrator of *The New Confessions*. "The date of my birth is the date of her death, and thus began all my misfortunes." The birth of John James Todd in the Calvinistic city of Edinburgh in 1899 reflects that of the original Jean Jacques in Geneva: "je cotulai la vie à ma mère, et ma naissance fut le premier de mes malheurs." And Todd, like Rousseau, has a brother seven years older.

His upbringing seems to hint at other parallels. The emphasis on flogging at Minto's Academy raises an expectation of our hero acquiring masochistic tastes, like Rousseau at the spanking hand of Mlle Lambercier. Instead, his preference is formed by the sight of the family housekeeper calming her own baby boy on the kitchen table with a deft little act of fellatio (apparently a common practice in many primitive societies).

Also at Minto's Academy, in an incident presumably prompted by Rousseau's contribution to a neighbour's cooking-pot, Todd comes across fellow pupils pissing on Hamish Malahide, a brilliant mathematician who is to become his closest friend. Another similarity is suggested and then sidestepped during Todd's disastrous infatuation for his aunt, a nod in the direction of Madame de Warens. In each case, the failure to mirror the original would appear to indicate that Todd is not a literary clone. The author has another role in store for him.

The span of history tackled in this novel is not the only aspect which might prompt comparison with Anthony Burgess's *Earthly Power*.

ers, also, but the similarities between the two books remain superficial. Boyd's narrator becomes a film-maker after service in the trenches with a Public Schools Battalion. (As might be expected from Boyd's previous work, the ethos of such a group is rendered grotesque when confronted with a reality as unassimilable as the Third Battle of Ypres.) Todd's most emotional experience, however, comes from reading Rousseau's *Les Confessions* in prison camp. Adapting them for the cinema is to become his life's work and obsession, first in Berlin between the wars and later in Hollywood.

Todd is an excruciating perfectionist. When working on the first part of the *Confessions*, he runs way over budget and finds himself months behind schedule. In the meantime the first talks finish the era of the silent film virtually overnight. Todd's masterpiece, although brilliant and daringly experimental with triple screens, has arrived just too late. It is a commercial disaster.

Only during the making of this film, reminiscent in many ways of Abel Gance's *Napoleon*, does it become clear that the role the author has been reserving for Todd is that of Rousseau's Boswell. It is a nice touch, yet a sense of confusion lingers. The novel's initial conceit – its title, its opening words, the parallel births and names and elder brothers – has created a distracting expectancy and a compulsion to compare both man and book with their originals.

Todd's subsequent adventures – his volatile affair with Doon Bogun, who plays Madame de Warens in *The Confessions*, the banning of his films by Goebbels after the Nazis come to power, his departure for Hollywood and his blacklisting after the war – veer wildly and unpredictably from pitfall to salvation in an appropriately eighteenth-century manner. This also helps to illustrate a central theme,

Destroying the amenities

E. S. Turner

DEREK ROBINSON
War Story
330pp. Macmillan. £10.95.
03344468X

Derek Robinson has developed a brand of "ripping yarn" all his own. His third novel about flyers at war is a whizz-bang of black comedy: red death, madness, corruption and dedicated destruction of amenities ("the first chandelier came down like a bomb"); all the things, in fact, that gave war a bad name. It is hard-bitten stuff, anti-Newbolt and anti-Biggles, yet disrespect falls short of subversion.

Robinson's last book, *Piece of Cake*, was a revisionist account of the Battle of Britain. This time we are with the Royal Flying Corps on the eve of the Somme. Lieutenant Oliver Paxton, aged eighteen, ex-Sherborna, is detailed to lead a flight of five urgently needed fighters from Shoreham to a field near Arras.

Thanks to bad weather and one thing or another his mission takes five days and he loses the other four aircraft. Unabashed, on the last lap he nearly writes off his surviving machine by attempting his first loop. Paxton, besides being a prize fool, is also a prig; and besides being a prig is also a fire-eater. The squadron soon has his measure, but he is slow to get the measure of his colleagues.

Hornet Squadron has strong elements of "Beetlejuice" and "Narkover". It is run by a young and undisciplined NCO; the squadron commander, an old man of twenty-four, is going mad and is liable to fly off to Brighton for tea; the adjutant, a pray to all tropical ailments, is pilaging the funds; the pilots slop about playing the inflated cricket. Can the voice of the schoolboy rally the drunks? If cannot, but new brooms are coming, including an admiral demoted from colonel for shooting too many of his own infantry in an effort to hold the line.

The descriptions of patrolling and aerial combat are superficially well done. German anti-aircraft bursts scatter the sky like huge blue lightning bolts and someone's washing air.

crick thrashed to the limit imitate "a wet dog on a cold day"; in the morning mist enemy fighters rise from the ground "like hatching flies". Death comes by pulverization, decapitation, flame and the chivalrous shot in the back. Odd sensibilities surface: faced with a chance to mow down German soldiers bathing, a pilot desists, "feeling squeamish about shooting naked men".

There is a touch of Waugh in the scenes of debauchery. Robinson says his account of Old Etonian officers wrecking a grand hotel in Amiens on the Fourth of June is based on a well-attested Etonian orgy held in England in 1917. He also claims authenticity for the ti-fort shooting down of a French Nieuport, after a Nieuport had (mistakenly?) shot down a British pilot; but authenticity hardly extends, perhaps, to the funeral service for the British victim, with the padre choosing as his text Pharaoh's cry in Exodus: "Entreat the Lord that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people." In a book like this, one expects to find the padre under close arrest; perhaps this one should have been.

Robinson is suitably sardonic about the first day of the Somme, quoting a contemporary newspaper headline, "Cheering into a Bath of Lead". It was easy to guess that the swimming pool Paxton caused to be dug by "Chink" labour would serve no more sinister purpose. *War Story* is briskly paced and its vigorous inventiveness belies its flat title; some of the mess badinage is very funny (but was "Be my guest" current then?) Those who were reared on Cecil Lewis's *Sagittarius Rising* may find it all too self-consciously outrageous, but stronger tastes will relish the whiff of battiness and brimstone.

The New Writers of the South: A fiction anthology edited by Charles East (287pp. University of Georgia Press. Paperback, \$12.95. 0 8203 0924 9) contains short stories and novel excerpts by writers whose first book appeared during the period 1975-85. Contributors include Elinor Clift, Richard Ford, Bobbie Ann Mason, Jayne Anne Phillips and Raymond Andrews. The anthology begins with an introduction by East in which he discusses the Southern writer's technique and choice of subject matter.

highlighted by his old schoolfriend, Malahide, when he explains in 1944 that even mathematics were being shown to be unpredictable. "They'll call this the Age of Uncertainty", he says. "The Age of Incompleteness." The experiences of the politically innocent Todd in the First World War, in Nazi Berlin and in McCarthyite Hollywood, are starkly situated on the Age of Enlightenment's reverse slope.

John James, like his namesake, takes pride in his individuality to the point of perversity. On his arrival in 1916 at Nieuport les Bains on the Belgian coast, he immediately sees himself as "the man on the far left" of the whole Western Front, which extends from his North Sea beach to the Swiss border. The notion of being out on a limb holds a strong appeal for him. But throughout his life he is to find himself consistently crossed or betrayed by opportunists cloaked in spiritual ideals and his films forgotten by all save a few enthusiasts.

The New Confessions is Boyd's most ambitious and most successful novel. It is an infinitely richer book than his enjoyable, although overrated, *An Ice-Cream War*, and it will more than reassure those who feared, after *Stars and Bars*, that his decline as a comic writer might have become a limitation. The Brythonic sense of humour is still present, but in a drier, less maric form. (Todd, a difficult character of quick emotions and a justifiable sense of persecution, almost comes across as

too mellow in the end.)

The key experiences and settings are powerfully evoked: childhood memories, the war in Flanders, the obsession of film-making under the atmosphere in Hollywood during the McCarthyite witch-hunt. The writing is often brilliant in his impressively economic vignettes – it is extremely rare to find sex treated with such unselfconscious humour – and the narrative as a whole possesses a compelling rhythm. The only criticism might be that at times the dialogue is too stiff, the prose too controlled.

Of his *Confessions*, Rousseau wrote: "Mon style inégal et naturel, tantôt rapide et tantôt diffus, tantôt sage et tantôt fou, tantôt grave et tantôt gai, fera lui-même partie de mon histoire". The confessional-memoir form of novel aims to balance present view with a revived past. Todd's earlier life is recalled with exquisite spontaneity, but later, the style of his account feels too tight to be entirely convincing, the tone too uniform when compared with those almost musical scales of emotion achieved in the original *Confessions*.

The comparison is probably unfair. It should be irrelevant, but Boyd has raised the ghost, and the ambivalent relationship between the two books still nags. On the other hand, as soon as one turns one's mind back to the satisfaction and enormous pleasure of being swept up in his story, such exceptions seem little more than a churlish quibble.

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GEOFFREY HARTMAN

Foreword by DONALD G. MARSHALL

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Inter-faith interfaces

Alan Race

Geoffrey Parrinder
Encountering World Religions
239pp. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark.
Paperback, £6.95.
0567 291375
JANS KÜNG
Christianity and the World Religions: Paths of
Dialogue with Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism
Translated by Peter Heinegg
461pp. Collins, £20.
000 217614 X

Relying on dogmatic realism or scriptural literalism, Christians have tended to assume that religious faith is an object of devotion automatically excluded those of a different faith. Critical theology, aware of the global multi-religious environment, is more likely to hold that religious truth is as much to do with the geography as with the history of tradition, as much to do with the discovery of a transcendent claim within diverse human experience as with the song of a particular tribe. Once admit Religious Studies into theology and a new enterprise is born. These two books ask what it means to be Christian in the light of a new openness towards alien religious convictions.

Geoffrey Parrinder is a veteran champion in Religious Studies. In *Encountering World Religions*, he offers us not flat descriptions, but a montage of reflections, examples of many movements, from early Buddhism to modern witchcraft. There is colour, liveliness and patient curiosity in his account, all of which is highly attractive. But descriptive record and theological evaluation are not easily correlated. It is not altogether clear what theory of religion Professor Parrinder espouses, nor what status the concepts of "faith" and "belief" carry for him. This creates unease as he oscillates between religious studies and theology proper. The more a religious encounter touches on questions of Christian concern for

instance, in relation to Muslim views of Jesus) the more he edges towards being theologically evaluative; the further away the encounter from questions directly bearing on Christian faith (as in the chapter on the Sikhs), the more he remains purely descriptive. But, to be fair to Parrinder, he set out to offer "a series of sketches", not a full-blown world theology. He comes clean theologically when, citing Klaus Klostermeier, he opts for a Christian inclusivism. This accepts that the religious experience of others enlarges the Christian understanding of Christ, who is forever open to other cultures. What this really means, however, is not examined.

Hans Küng enters the fascinating but bewildering territory of dialogue between people of differing religious commitments from his base as a systematic theologian. He has pursued a journey first hinted at in 1964 when he gave a lecture in Bombay entitled "Christian Revelation and Non-Christian Religions". There he followed a line similar to his fellow Catholic, Karl Rahner, who talked of other religious peoples as "anonymous Christians". By 1979, when Küng wrote *On Being a Christian*, he had clung his minimalist advocated an inclusive dialogue which was to be mutually critical, but in which Christianity was a kind of senior partner ("critical catalyst"). *Christianity and the World Religions* fills out the promise inherent within that change of mind. It reports an experiment in the theological faculty of Tübingen where Küng gave a Christian response to presentations describing Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. (There has been a trick in the part of the publishers: Küng's name on the book's cover hides the fact that just under half of it was written by other contributors - Josef van Ess, Heinrich van Stancron and Heinz Becherl - colleagues who supply the descriptive parts on those three religions.) The ground covered is immensely impressive, including metaphysics, the history of traditions, and the common practices of prayer, celebration and community life.

Küng charts an Anglican-style via media

between narrow-minded exclusiveness and sloppy indifference. Without fudging irreconcilable features in Christianity and the other three traditions, he nevertheless seeks to show out their points of contact and complementarity. Sometimes this involves Küng in a "compare and contrast" exercise, sometimes in real conflict. It turns out that it is easier to "compare and contrast" Christianity with Islam and Hinduism, within an overall view of the transcendence of God as propounded by those three traditions, than in relation to Buddhism, which is agnostic about the question of God. There is no doubt that Küng has performed a marathon. And in spite of all the honest wrestling with religions as they are, and the refusal of easy compromises, there is a sense in which the challenge has not been fully taken up. Küng remains responsive to texts and not to people. Now that theology recognizes the role of human imagination in the formulation and use of religious symbols, the consequences in inter-religious dialogue are bound to be more far-reaching than he allows.

Both Parrinder's enlarged Christ concept and the suspicion that Küng has not let go completely of his "senior partner" idea are evidence of engagement in dialogue that is yet dependent upon a Christian theology, and likely to be biased. The current alternative favours a kind of Habermasian plunge into cool encounters. But the problem here is that in the expectation that religions can learn from one another there is likely to be a concealed theological model about convergent religious truth. What is required rather is a view which allows a provisional theology of dialogue, one which values "equally" the religious experience of the different partners in the dialogue, takes full cognizance of the historically conditioned texts of each tradition and ventures the suggestion that it is one reality which informs, with differing degrees of adequacy, the varying traditions. The pursuit of religious truth together would lead ultimately to mutual transformation within an overall partnership.

Socialist gospeller

Edward Norman

Robert Hughes
The Red Dean: The life and riddle of Dr
Hewlett Johnson, born 1874, died 1966, Dean
of Canterbury 1931 to 1963
218pp. Worthing: Churchman. £17.95.
185093 0597

It is twenty years since the death of Dr Hewlett Johnson, advocate of Soviet Communism, enthusiast for Mao, winner of the Stalin Peace Prize, and Dean of Canterbury. But it cannot be said that his departure left a gap in the Church, or that his memory has been especially enduring. In one sense this does him an injustice. When Johnson was a young man, in the years between the wars, very many of the more intellectually gifted in the Church of England were attracted to progressive political ideas, and all he did, in effect, was to apply the common enthusiasm within a sedulous framework. That is to say, he gave up a kind of vicarious and thrilling flirtation with socialism and actually sought a means of providing it with a structural expression. To that extent he was rather like the genuine socialists in the British Labour Party - who are always being denounced as extremists by the respectable liberal reformers who constitute the leadership of the party.

Johnson never joined the Communist Party, but his pedigree was better than those of many who did. His staying power was certainly greater; he supported the most ruthless of Soviet actions, including the invasion of Finland and the suppression of the Hungarian uprising. His support for the Communists, however, indicated some limitations of his nature. His father was the owner of a Lancashire wire works, and Johnson received a technical and engineering education, only completed with a second class in Theology at Oxford when he was a mature student. His mind was not of the first rank; although he had an attraction to wider cultural and political interests, it rarely attained subtlety or depth of understanding. Offended by the social miseries of his day, he fell upon Communism as a corrective. It was, he supposed, practical: it actually transformed the social conditions in which human potential was held back by selfishness and capitalist greed. Evidence that this was not quite the case escaped his notice, and Johnson may be numbered among the other luminaries of the Western intelligentsia whose trips to the Soviet Union in the 1930s, and to China in the 60s, produced imitations of a new dawn.

In his study, *The Red Dean*, Robert Hughes describes Johnson as "a riddle". He was not that. Nor was he a glib, old-fashioned fool, as he is often depicted, nor an extremist, as the other dignitaries of the Church of England imagined. He was simply a good and prosaic man whose lack of training in political thought prepared him to espouse a system which seemed to promise the creation of the Kingdom of God in the world of existing realities. The contemporary world is not without his counterparts. As to the fundamental ideological incompatibilities between Marxism and Christianity - the problem of historical materialism, of the relativity of religious phenomena - he never addressed himself to them. Communism, for Johnson, was a bread-and-butter matter; it was about feeding the hungry and clothing the poor. His published works, and especially *The Socialist Sixth of the World*, read like occasional papers overflowing from the think-tanks of the World Council of Churches. His unqualified praise of Stalin anticipates, in style, those of Castro by later religious agencies.

Robert Hughes's biography is workmanlike and does not disguise the problems of its subject, while retaining a respectful tone. That is its strength. Although Hughes had Hewlett Johnson's personal papers available to him, they do not seem to have added much of significance to what is already known - or what may be learned from Johnson's posthumously published autobiography, *Searching for Light* (1968), large parts of which were written by his wife and simply shown to him for approval. Those who wish to enlarge their study further can always consult the Soviet *Encyclopaedia*, where Johnson's entry is longer than the one devoted to Christ.

Radical on the boundary

Stefan Collini

Paul Buhle (Editor)
C. L. R. James: His life and work
286pp. Allison and Busby. £5.95.
085031 6855
C. L. R. JAMES
Cricket
Edited by Anna Grimshaw
319pp. Allison and Busby. £14.95.
085031 6774

C. L. R. James is bound to be known in Britain primarily, perhaps even exclusively, as a cricket writer. However, as one contributor to *C. L. R. James: His life and work* observes, "James's list of identities could be extended almost indefinitely: pioneering West Indian novelist; crusading nationalist; cricket columnist for the British *Guardian*; philosopher and precocious promoter of the young Karl Marx; legendary historian of the Haitian slave revolt; playwright; West Indian independence leader; pan-Africanist; literary critic of Shakespeare and Melville. . . . No single volume can take in the whole man." Freed with this extraordinary litany, one squirms at the unintended bathos of the quotation from *Newsweek* cited in the blurb of *Cricket*: "C. L. R. James is no ordinary sports writer". He's not your ordinary pan-Africanist either, come to that.

James was born in 1901 in Trinidad, where he initially worked as a teacher and journalist. As a young man he played, watched and talked cricket, absorbed in, but already coming to be reflective about, its meaning for the socially and ethnically divided life of the island. This makes it all the more remarkable that when he left Trinidad in 1932, he was not to return for twenty-six years. He left for England, initially to help Leanne Constable write his autobiography, thus forming a friendship which was to mould his identity in several ways. He also served an invaluable apprenticeship to

Neville Cardus as cricket reporter for the *Manchester Guardian* for three years. But his political radicalism was already far advanced, and it is characteristic of the extraordinary juxtapositions of his career that it was while living with Constantine in Lancashire that he first read Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*, a book which had a major impact on his own intellectual and political development.

In 1938 he went to the United States at the invitation of the American Socialist Workers' Party. He was to stay there for fifteen years, working as a political organizer while writing works of Marxist theory and black history. During those fifteen years he never once saw a cricket match. He returned to England in 1953 and to Trinidad five years later, where he took a prominent part in the nationalist movement. Thereafter, he lectured and travelled widely in Europe, Africa and the United States; since 1981 he has lived in Brixton, in south London.

For those, and they are many, who know and admire James through his minor classic *Beyond a Boundary* (1963), these two books will be somewhat disappointing. That unclassifiable work - part autobiography, part cricket history, part cultural meditation, part nationalist polemic - was remarkable for its strong sense of form, despite the apparent heterogeneity of its subject-matter. A discussion of the ethical teaching of Dr Arnold, the Victorian headmaster, seemed to lead ineluctably into an argument for making Frank Worrell the first black man to captain the West Indian cricket team. It was a book by someone who was passionate about cricket, but who never lost sight of the truth that there were far more important things than cricket to be passionate about. Unfortunately, both these compilations are pieces of book-making that do little justice to the author of that deeply pondered, carefully crafted work.

Cricket contains a selection of James's cricketing journalism ranging from his reports for the *Manchester Guardian* in the early 1930s to articles in *Race Today* in the mid-1980s. In

general, if such ephemera are to bear reprinting so long after the events they describe, the author must either be a distinguished stylist in his own right or else rise in a level of analysis that transcends the local detail. James's early *Guardian* pieces meet neither of these criteria. Perhaps he consciously disciplined himself to write in a manner he thought appropriate to the stiffer social world of English cricket, perhaps his role as Cardus's understaffer did not permit much adventurousness, either practically or psychologically. Certainly, some of the writing has a slightly dated, *Boy's Own* ring to it now: reporting a run-out, for example, he wrote "Leyland could not get back in time and had to go: it was a grave loss to the English eleven". The more recent pieces are more expansive and idiosyncratic, but, alas, increasingly loose and dogmatic, even downright cranky. When he thought that David Gower should be selected for a forthcoming West Indian tour, he reported in one of his articles, "I did what I could. I sent a telegram to Gower's MCC, Lord's telling him that I was expecting to welcome him to the Caribbean particularly in relation to Caribbean cricket. My name counted for something. . . .". Still, even if this book does nothing to increase James's stature as a writer, cricket-lovers will doubtless find interest in these accounts of familiar moments and figures seen from an unfamiliar angle, and he has certainly earned his right to a volume of

occasionalia. C. L. R. James: *His life and work* is an altogether more problematic production. In a very slightly different form, it was originally published in 1981 as a special issue of the Chicago-based journal *Urgent Tasks: Journal of the Revolutionary Left*. It still bears the marks both of being addressed to an American audience (which is a bit hard on the cricketer side of James's life and work) and of being internal to one very narrow set of political presuppositions and categories (which is a bit hard on the rest of us). Some of the contributions are dashed-off tributes, only a page or two long; others tell us more than we want to know about the factional disputes within the American Communist Party of the 1940s. For all that, the range of James's interests, his almost touching intellectual seriousness, and his sheer concern about the world come across, more by incidental anecdote than through the rather heavy-footed appraisals of his political writings. At one moment he is in a plane bound for a conference on Caribbean writing in Havana, discussing the problem of light in the paintings of El Greco and Titian with the Guyanese novelist Wilson Harris; at another he is reading Hegel's *Science of Logic* by the side of black-country dirt roads in southern Missouri while waiting to speak to the black sharecroppers he had come to organize. No doubt about it: C. L. R. James is no ordinary sports writer.



John Fennell's painting "John Burgess of Clifton with his Harriers" (1838) is one of the 180 illustrations in *Victorian Delights: Reflections of taste in the nineteenth century* by John Haffield (132pp. Herbert Press. £12.95. 0 906969 689).

The unreliable in pursuit. . .

Roger Longrigg

Caroline Blackwood
In the Pink: Caroline Blackwood on hunting
164pp. Bloomsbury. £11.95.
0 7475 0030 9

In the Pink reads as though Caroline Blackwood wrote a series of loosely connected articles about foxhunting for a glossy magazine, had them rejected, and then decided to bind them together in hard covers. It is difficult to guess why else this book should have been written; it is too unreliable in detail to be informative, and maintains too strict a moral neutrality to have the interest of an tract. It can be recommended neither to those who know about hunting nor to those who want to know about it. The sort of information we are given is that Victorian women "galloped alongside the bewhiskered men casting seductive glances from under their provocative hunting veils".

There are extended interviews with "antis" and others - apparently chosen because they are unrepresentative of those who follow the sport. There is no account of the physical act of chasing foxes on horseback - there are accounts of two days spent in cars attempting to follow the hunt, but apparently no hounds or horses were sighted after the meet. Literary quotations appear for no reason and in no historical context; there is no evidence of broad reading or serious research.

Someone going hunting is described by Blackwood as a "hunter" or "huntsman": in Britain the former is a horse (in America a sportsman with a firearm) and the latter a person in charge of a pack of hounds in the field. William Somerville, most eminent of early Georgian hare-hunters, is described as a Regency fox-hunter, and "Nimrod" (uniquely influential as a hunting writer in the 1820s) and even Peter Beckford are thought to have been Victorians. A "drafted" hound means one transferred to another kennel, not condemned to death. In the season a hound today does not "walk about thirty miles to the next several times a week". There was no hunting tailor called Mr Pink. "The Earl of Spencer" would be surprised by that party.

The Lord's Companion (460pp. Michael Joseph. £16.95. 1 85145 132 3), edited by Benny Green, is a rich, varied collection of pieces taken from novels, letters, memoirs, histories, magazines and newspapers which reflect the drama and farce, the dignity and the absurdity of events over the years of the headquarters of English cricket - on and off the field. Though possessing an index, the absence of a contents page makes the book more of a lucky dip for the enthusiast than a reference book for the historian of cricket. The fictional contributions include writings by Thackeray, Galsworthy, Conan Doyle, P. G. Wodehouse and Ted Dexter.

Telling divers hands apart

J. L. Houlden

Anthony Kenny
A Stylistic Study of the New Testament
124pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £20.
0 19 82617 0

Anthony Kenny, the Master of Balliol College, Oxford, has shown himself a scholar of great versatility as regards both subject-matter and genre. He has written not only philosophy but also studies of his predecessor John Wyclif, on the logic of nuclear deterrence, autobiography - and *A Stylistic Study of the New Testament*.

The stylistic approach to contested issues of authorship in the New Testament has been

Wedding dreams

My father-in-law takes his hand
From the controls and points: below our plane,
Hunched rock, a torrent foaming
From its head: The Ape Bride.
I hear his voice explain.

The girl my friends saw naked on the chair
Is not this woman zipped in a white dress.
Like birds they surround me, fluffing;
Pinning. Veiled and crowned,
I shut both eyes

And out of my bare chest
Poke shoots with barbed green tips.
I grasp them, pull
From the deep white cavity
A hissing fruit.
A boyfriend's head.

Alice Golembiewski Phillips

dormant of late. Indeed - beginners in biblical studies aside, for whom the subject retains fascination and significance - the matter of authorship, once in the forefront of "higher criticism", has come to take a back seat. This has been especially true for works for which the official and traditional attribution of authorship must be in doubt, for example all of the Gospels. The quest for names has, fortunately, come to seem pointless: little is gained if a virtually unknown figure (such as Luke or Mark) is credited with this writing or that, itself a fairly isolated phenomenon, so far as our knowledge goes, within the literature and world of its time.

But stylistic study is not so much interested in assigning names as in making links: if the author of work A is X, is the author of work B also X or is it more probably Y (whoever X and Y may be)? Like most aspects of inquiry into the New Testament, stylistic study's significant origins lie in the nineteenth century; but its modern fame goes back to the 1960s, when the work of A. Q. Morton enjoyed for a time the kind of notoriety which sometimes (and unpredictably) attends the reissuing of conclusions long accepted in academia but felt in wider circles to be tinged with naughtiness. The *frisson* was all the stronger in this case because Morton imported the very secular computer into a sacred enclosure. Using more or less exact methods of sentence measurement and word counting, he confirmed views about the authorship of the letters attributed to Paul that caused little surprise to those used to attacking the matter along less precise literary or historical lines. His judgment on the Gospel of John, assigning it to different authors working in strips, was found less congenial.

Morton's work provoked a certain amount of robust comment. Correspondence columns for a time populated by those who claimed to have computers which, for example, demonstrated that Charles Dickens never wrote *David Copperfield*. The more serious and optimistic reaction has been to recognize the need for refinement in the application of the

method, with the application of a much greater range of tests and measurements, and, soberly, to maintain that it has no monopoly of the right to be heard on these questions.

Kenny's book owes much to developments since Morton, especially to the close grammatical analysis in Barbara and Timothy Foberg's *Analytical Greek New Testament* (1981). He has measured some hundred features of style and applied the results to three leading problems of authorship in the New Testament: the common authorship of the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, and of the Revelation of John and the Gospel of John, and the Pauline attribution of thirteen Epistles included in the New Testament. The journey is attractively guided (though it is not recommended to the innumerate), but journey's end is not remarkable. The special relationship between Luke and Acts is confirmed; so is the different authorship of the Revelation and the Gospel of John. The situation with regard to the Pauline Epistles is less reassuring to received opinion. By contrast to older stylistic studies, which used many fewer criteria, the result here is to show a group of writings which possess unusual versatility of style. Only one letter (that of Titus) gives significant evidence of being outside this unclassifiable class.

It is precisely in the Pauline area that the question of authorship is of widest interest; for here - as is not the case with the Gospels - the putative writer, Paul, is a sufficiently identifiable figure for it to be important to know what evidence really testifies to his life and thought and what does not. As far as stylistic study goes, then, scholarly doubt about (at least) 1 and 2 Timothy, Ephesians and Colossians is not confirmed. But, as Kenny readily admits, stylistic study does not go all the way; and there is scope for scholars of other proclivities. There is also great uncertainty about the relative weight to be given to the various tests; not all of them, tell us very much of importance, especially when applied to the briefest writings, for settling the issue of Pauline authorship.

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Archaeology

Cunliffe, Barry. *Origins: The roots of European civilisation*. 112pp., £16.95, 0 503 20541 1. 1/10/87.

Architecture

Barkshire, Paul. *Unexplored London*. St Albans: Lennard. 112pp., £12.95, 1 85291 003 4. 1/10/87.
Orvosh, Allen, editor. *Le Corbusier: Essays*. Guildford: Princeton UP. 167pp., illus. £12.50 (paperback). 0 691 00278 9. 7/10/87.

Art

Bonyhady, Tim. *Australian Colonial Paintings in the Australian National Gallery*. Oxford UP/Camber: National Gallery. 270pp., plates. £60, 0 642 88758 6. 6/10/87.
Holgate, David. *New Hall*. Faber. 243pp., plates. £60, 0 571 18073 R. 12/10/87.
Orvosh, Allen, editor. *Le Corbusier: Essays*. Guildford: Princeton UP. 167pp., illus. £12.50 (paperback). 0 691 00278 9. 7/10/87.
Hunt, Julia. *Understanding Far Eastern Art: A complete guide to the arts of China, Japan and Korea*. Oxford: Phaidon. 208pp., plates. £19.50, 0 7148 2440 2. 1/10/87.
Kelly, Sean, and Edward Lucie-Smith. *The Self-Portrait: A modern view*. Seren. 26-34 Rathchild Street, West Norwood, London SE27 0HQ. 152pp., plates. £30, 1 870758 00 5. 15/9/87.
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